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SIGURD IBSEN

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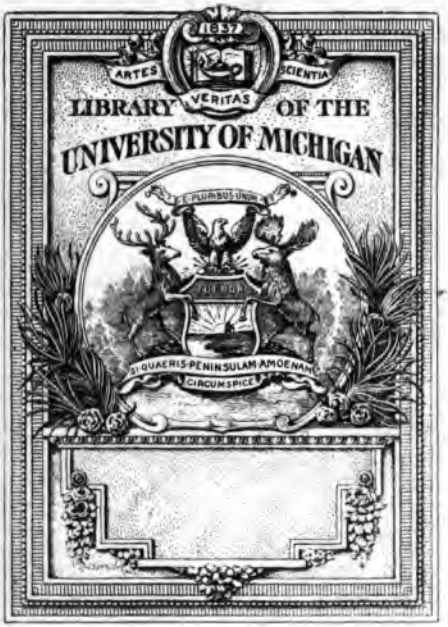
MARCIA HARGIS JANSON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ROBERT FRANK

ROBERT FRANK

BY

SIGURD IBSEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN

BY

MARCIA HARGIS JANSON

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

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CHARACTERS

ROBERT FRANK.
JULIA CAMERON.
LEVINSKI.
WINKELMANN.
PRETORIUS.
ULVELING.
BLIX.
AN OLD DIPLOMAT.
A MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.
A YOUNG DIPLOMAT.
THE AMBASSADRESS.
THE DUCHESS.
THE COUNTESS.
THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
THE MINISTER OF WAR.
AN OFFICER.
A JANITOR.
THE SYNDICALISTS.

272171

ROBERT FRANK

ROBERT FRANK

FIRST ACT

A drawing-room in the American Embassy. The ceiling decorated with frescoes, the walls covered with Gobelins. Gilded furniture, upholstered in silk. In the centre of the room an enormous table in rococo style. At the left a door to the adjacent room, at the right windows with drawn curtains.

In the background columns support a wide opening through which one sees into a promenade hall, where men and women in evening dress are moving about.

The ballroom adjoins the promenade hall but is so far away that the orchestra can be heard only very faintly.

In the foreground at the right an old gentleman is sitting talking to two others, one middle-aged, the other young.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

The little Tanagra figure? No, I did not get it. When I came back to the art dealer's it had been sold. To Mrs. Hunter, of course.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

To Mrs. Hunter? She did not tell me that.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

These rich Americans are insatiable. As soon as they hear of anything rare they will have it, no matter what it is. Look at that table top over there, for example. Made of one enormous block of malachite. One must go to Russia to find anything like it.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

The table, however, came from Paris. I was with the ambassadress myself when she bought it at the Hotel Drouot. Both it and the Flemish tapestries that hang here on the walls.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

It is true they do say that you have stood sponsor for the entire establishment here.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

Too much honor. But Mrs. Hunter sometimes takes me with her for advice when it is a matter of furniture or works of art.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

It is wise of her to do so, isn't it? Money they have in abundance, the good Americans, but as to what they shall use it for they certainly have little judgment.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

I am really not so certain of that. To be sure, as regards the ambassador, his interests scarcely lie in the

domain of æsthetics. Though otherwise, he must be acknowledged to be an eminent man. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Heaven help us, I know that well enough—he was one of Chicago's most distinguished pork butchers.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

He retired from business long ago. And as to Mrs. Hunter, I can inform you that she belongs to a good and old family.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

At least, she says so herself.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

I have heard it from others also. I knew the Hunters in Washington—even at that time they lived in magnificent style. The whole diplomatic corps was often to be seen in their house.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

All that does not prevent Mrs. Hunter from occasionally permitting herself to fail in the tact that one ought to demand of an ambassadress. You remember the story of the pearls the other night.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

Yes, the pearl story was a rather unpleasant affair; that I do not deny. If only Mrs. Hunter had asked my opinion before she gave her fancy-dress ball.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

I am sure that that tactless idea would never have come to anything if her niece had been here then. The ambassadress would simply have not been permitted. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Her niece—whom do you mean? Oh, now I understand—the young brunette to whom Mrs. Hunter introduced me this evening. Yes, she looks as though there were race in her. What is her name— I do not remember it. . . .

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Miss Cameron.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Quite right—Miss Cameron. It certainly looks as if you were very much interested in her. I stood and watched you a little while ago when you engaged her for a waltz. Yes, yes, she is a charming goldfish, that we must grant.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

No, she cannot be called a goldfish. She is not at all rich.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

At any rate, she dances to perfection. And is as graceful as an Undine. . . . Strange, I have not met her before.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

No, she just arrived in town day before yesterday. She has come on account of all this commotion about the syndicalists.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

What is it you are saying? What has she got to do with that?

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

She represents a big New York newspaper. The regular correspondent here became ill and Miss Cameron undertook to act as his substitute. She is a trained journalist.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Well, I never heard anything to equal that. A young girl, who can hardly be twenty-five years old and who is a political correspondent! Why, it is a perfect little monstrosity! . . . And she is perhaps living right here in the embassy?

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Yes, but that is quite natural, as the ambassadress is her aunt.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Natural? I call it improper. I must really ask: what is the ambassador about? Even a man from Chicago ought to know that a newspaper office cannot be installed

in an embassy. Least of all, if it is one that meddles with politics.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

It does not follow that Miss Cameron will indulge in the expression of her political opinions. From what I know of American newspaper methods, she will be concerned chiefly with reporting. . . . But, of course, it is another matter whether or not it is a wise thing to send a young woman here when a revolution is brewing. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Revolution—I would not use such a strong word.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

However, what happened this afternoon seems to indicate that the government is prepared for the worst.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

The scene in Parliament. Oh, yes. Were you present when it took place?

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

Yes, and most of the diplomats made their appearance. But I noticed that your Excellency was absent. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

I spent the afternoon in a much more agreeable way—I had tea with a charming little friend. . . . Besides, I had no idea that a *coup de théâtre* was imminent.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

Nor we others. But an important political debate had been announced in a special order of the day and participation of party leaders and weighty statements from the government bench. So the hall was quite full, not a vacant place either in the boxes or in the gallery. A number of society women were there, too. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

There is always an exhibition of ladies' hats on such an occasion. But then what happened next?

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

There really is not much to tell, for the whole thing lasted hardly five minutes. . . . The President rings his bell: the sitting is declared open, the Prime Minister has the floor. Frank rises, opens his portfolio, takes out a document, and reads. The listeners hardly believe their own ears—it is a declaration that Parliament is adjourned indefinitely. When he finished reading, it was quite still for a moment. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

But afterward there was a disturbance I fancy.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

Not exactly a disturbance, but a buzzing of voices down in the hall, a running back and forth like ants in an

ant-hill. . . . All were perplexed, the ministerialists not less so than others.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

The government had not warned a soul. Not even its factotum, Pretorius.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Frank, as a rule, I do not number among my favorites, but it does amuse me to hear that he put these blustering parliamenteers out of the game.

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT.

The question is whether or not he can master the general strike when it breaks out. The syndicalists are said to be perfectly desperate. Blood will certainly be shed.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

At any rate, we can expect a lively time. . . . Excuse me, gentlemen, I see some one to whom I must go and pay my respects. (*He rises and goes toward two young women who have seated themselves at the left.*)

THE MIDDLE-AGED DIPLOMAT (*to the young* DIPLOMAT).

Don't you think we should move about a little? . . . (*They go out into the promenade hall.*)

THE OLD DIPLOMAT (*who has now approached the ladies*).

Allow me, ladies, to express my pleasure at meeting you here—Juno and Venus in lovely union. . . . (*He sits down.*)

THE DUCHESS.

I suppose I am Juno and Dolly Venus. . . . Thanks for the mythological compliment.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Gracious Duchess, I know well that mythological figurativeness is old-fashioned. But I am a very old man, and in my youth. . . .

THE COUNTESS.

You are not at all old. Just recently some one guessed that you were seventy-five, and do you know what I replied? "Not seventy-five, but three times twenty-five."

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Amiable Countess, how you come back to me in that remark! You may believe, I have thirsted for your "esprit" during the time you have been down in Cairo. So imagine my delight when I heard this evening that you were with us once more.

THE COUNTESS.

You are really too touching. And, of course, I am glad, too, to see familiar faces about me. But, nevertheless, I almost regret having come back.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

You regret it?

THE COUNTESS.

Yes, for I think the town has become so unpleasant since I was here. It is as though there were something threatening in the air. . . .

THE DUCHESS.

Ferdinand and I do not like being here, either. We are thinking somewhat of closing the house and going down to the Riviera. . . . Just fancy, when we drove here they threw stones at the carriage and a window was broken.

THE COUNTESS.

And did you notice what a crowd of ragged individuals stood outside of the entrance here? When I got out a terrible creature ran into the vestibule and said something ugly to me, so ugly that it cannot be repeated. . . .

THE DUCHESS.

I wonder if it would not have been wiser to have sent our excuses and stayed away. My maid warned me when she was doing my hair. She said that there had been something in a paper called "The Proletariat."

THE COUNTESS.

But Fanny—does your maid read such papers?

THE DUCHESS.

Not she—I would never allow that. But you know such people hear so much. . . . Anyhow, the paper

to-day has an article called the "Pearl-Queen," which, of course, is aimed at Mrs. Hunter. . . .

THE COUNTESS.

Mrs. Hunter—the "Pearl-Queen"? To what are you referring?

THE DUCHESS.

Oh, that is true, you were away. But I thought I had written you. . . . Oh, but you must hear. . . . A few weeks ago the Hunters gave a big costume ball. We were all to come in eighteenth-century toilets. It was to represent a court ball at Versailles.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Where Mr. Hunter, from Chicago, made his appearance as Louis the Fifteenth. . . .

THE COUNTESS.

And Mrs. Hunter? Which of the mistresses was she —Pompadour or Du Barry?

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

She was no other than the legitimate queen, Maria Lesczynska. . . . She and her royal spouse had practised a minuet, with which they opened the ball. It was a sight for the gods.

THE DUCHESS.

The minuet secured flatteries enough for them. . . . It is really repulsive—the way these people are courted on all sides, even by people who have not the least need of them—either of them or of their money bags.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Yes, it is curious to see how most people act when confronted by a multimillionaire. Exactly like waiters. And they don't even do it for the sake of tips. . . . They humble themselves gratis; their dance around the golden calf is quite disinterested.

THE DUCHESS.

But why on earth do they do it then?

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

I presume that it is a form of piety. That their adoration of Mammon is something similar to the old sun-worship.

THE DUCHESS.

A very profound explanation. I did not know that you had such philosophical tendencies. . . . But we have entirely got away from what we were telling Dolly. . . . Well! The invitation to the costume ball requested the ladies to wear no jewels except pearls. So we, suspecting no mischief, decked ourselves out in everything we owned

of the sort. And as regards myself, I certainly thought that my pearls were presentable. . . .

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Your pearls are one of the sights that are worth seeing, dear Duchess.

THE DUCHESS.

Then what do you say of Mrs. Hunter's jewels? Do you remember the sight that met us, when she received us in the blue drawing-room?

THE COUNTESS.

Was it so overwhelming?

THE DUCHESS.

You cannot imagine how she had rigged herself out that evening. Her gown was entirely covered by a tunic made of small pearls, and in addition there were ropes of pearls about the corsage and hips. And in her ears she had pearls as big as hazelnuts. And around her neck a pearl collar of no less than twelve rows. And on her head a tiara of five enormous pearls, those that are shaped like pears. I simply had a nervous shock, and I was not the only one. Of course, the evening was spoiled for us women.

THE COUNTESS.

And I must say it was a strange lack of tact for her to strive to surpass her guests in that way.

THE DUCHESS.

Humble us, crush us, that is what she imagined she could do.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

No, I don't attribute such spiteful designs to her. She really gives the impression of being a good-natured soul. Just so blessedly stupid, so incurably tactless.

THE DUCHESS.

At any rate, she is not so stupid but that she can advertise herself. As usual, she had also invited the reporters and she must needs inform them what the pearls were worth. I don't remember now how many millions, but it was in all the papers the next day.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Yes, and in the Socialist papers, too. And they have not dropped the subject yet, but have taken note of the Pearl-Queen and her imitation Versailles. Their leader, Levinski, has written a flaming article about it—we are all to be swept away like the *ancien régime* in its day, both you, ladies, and Mrs. Hunter and I and all the other parasitic creatures. The new revolution is going to make an end of us.

THE COUNTESS.

Must there really be a revolution?

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

I have not any desire to undertake to play the prophet. But if it comes, then I will gladly lay my head on the guillotine—on one condition, however.

THE COUNTESS.

And that is?

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

That I can count on your solacing company on the way to the scaffold.

THE COUNTESS.

So I am to go, too, and let my head be cut off, just to keep you company. I must say that is the acme of egoism.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

But an egoism that springs from love.

THE COUNTESS.

Oh, you, with your declarations of love.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

You ought not to make light of them. My love has rather something tragic about it. Imagine a singer whose voice fails him, while his spirit and longing are as mighty as before. . . .

THE COUNTESS.

Your voice has doubtless covered several octaves.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

I make bold to say that it has had an unusual range. And even to this very day—*j'ai de beaux restes.* . . . You doubt? I see it on your face. You suspect that I can sing only falsetto . . . like the singers in the Sistine chapel. . . .

THE COUNTESS.

You are and always will be incorrigible.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Don't try to hide your lovely face behind your fan. I am well aware that a knowing smile ripples on your rosy lips, that your starlike eyes are dancing with roguish naughtiness.

THE COUNTESS.

I am not going to listen to you any more, *mauvais sujet* that you are. Now be off with you, and I hope you feel ashamed of yourself.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

I obey but intend to pay you a visit soon. When may one hope to find you at home?

THE COUNTESS.

Just as before. I receive every Thursday from five to seven.

THE OLD DIPLOMAT.

Thursday, then . . . Gracious Duchess! (*He bows and goes out into the promenade hall.*)

THE DUCHESS.

Thank Heaven, we are rid of him, the old monkey! . . . But let us go sit some place else—we shall be disturbed here continually. . . .

THE COUNTESS.

Yes, let us. Dearest Fanny, I have a thousand things to tell you about my trip. . . . (*They go out at the left. At the same time* ULVELING *comes in from the promenade hall and* BLIX *from the adjoining drawing-room. They meet and remain standing by the large rococo table.*)

ULVELING.

What! *You* here, too, Blix? I thought you would be sitting in your office racking your brains over your editorial.

BLIX.

Yes, that editorial could easily cause some brain-racking. The evening papers are at their wits' end. Fortunately, we don't appear until morning and, if I can just get the Prime Minister to talk. . . . He is not here yet, but has promised to put in his appearance.

ULVELING.

The Prime Minister at a ball! At such a moment as this! While all we other political people are fairly crushed by the seriousness of the situation! It's improper, it's unparalleled cynicism.

BLIX.

But you yourself are here at the ball, Herr Ulveling, and I see that several of your colleagues are present, too.

ULVELING.

It is quite a different affair for me to be here. I am a common representative of the people, to whom no one has thought of intrusting the weighty affairs of government.

BLIX.

However, it was once said that Frank was going to admit you to his cabinet.

ULVELING.

When it came to the point, doubtless I was not found to be sufficiently submissive. That man does not want coworkers in his ministry; he wants only tools and nodding manikins.

BLIX.

Oh, he estimates you highly anyhow. You have certainly always been a reliable member of the ministerial "block."

ULVELING.

Ha! Ha! The ministerial "block"! A block that is constantly in a state of fluidity. Can you tell me offhand how often it has undergone transformation in the last year? It is all the same to him what groups it is com-

posed of—he uses them in turn, exactly as a man changes his shirt. . . . But do you know what *I* think?

BLIX.

What?

ULVELING.

I believe that he is at heart a revolutionary. In spite of position and orders and imperious manner. A disguised Jacobin. Remember! He made his first appearance as a socialist.

BLIX.

That was in the greenness of his youth.

ULVELING.

But he is still comparatively young. At least not old enough to have forgotten his first love. And I dare say he will turn back to it. This profit-sharing law for the workmen that he has tried with all his might to force on Parliament—do you maintain that that will not lead us into the purest socialism?

BLIX.

Of course, you know my point of view. I haven't cared to attack it—nor defend it, either.

ULVELING.

But this time he has drawn his bow too taut. First this mad proposal and now the challenge he has thrown in

our faces to-day. Look here, don't you think it about time that we should manage to get him out of the way?

BLIX.

Now! In the midst of this muddle that is getting worse every day? Who on earth would be willing to undertake to form a government under such circumstances?

ULVELING.

Oh, not right away. But later, when the difficulties of the situation become too much for him to manage. That will be the moment to throttle him. It is simply our moral duty, for the man is undoubtedly dangerous to society.

BLIX.

I don't know exactly what to think. Personally I haven't anything against Frank. On the contrary, I owe him gratitude for many a favor.

ULVELING.

That's the point exactly. He has been able to keep himself in power because he has always had something to give away. . . . You are, of course, afraid to lose the assistance he has given you—but as far as that is concerned, he has helped your competitors also. I wonder how many newspapers have kept soul and body together by means of that secret fund—all in all, what he has put forth in the line of corruption.

BLIX.

You parliamentary gentlemen would do well to go slowly when you talk of corruption to us journalists. I know more than one case where the representatives' votes have been rewarded with marks of favor to themselves or to their relatives.

ULVELING.

If you are by this referring to the story of myself and my son-in-law . . .

BLIX.

I wasn't thinking of *that* exactly, but since you mention it we may just as well include it.

ULVELING.

The accusation was unfounded and I stamp it once more as a contemptible libel. On the other hand, I willingly acknowledge that as far as my colleagues are concerned, many of them are far from spotless. . . . And not only they. . . . This distribution of concessions and contracts, all these scandalous deals which have been carried on for years under our very eyes.

BLIX.

We always find it scandalous when some one else walks off with the profit.

ULVELING.

I do not think such conditions call for jesting remarks. Seriously, what can one think of a so-called statesman

that deliberately goes to work to demoralize those about him?

BLIX.

And what can one think of *us* who gladly go forth and *allow* ourselves to be demoralized?

ULVELING.

Of "us"! I beg of you, speak for yourself and leave me out of the game. Thank Heaven, there are still to be found in our political life men who are able to show themselves with uplifted heads—men whose backbones he has not been able to bend. You will soon see for yourself. . . . Now I can give you a piece of news.

BLIX.

News?

ULVELING.

Yes, even more than that—I feel justified in calling it an event. . . . I and a number of others of the same mind have decided to secede from the "block" and withdraw our allegiance from the government. We already form a considerable nucleus, and more will join us later. You can't imagine what an aggregate of ill-will and hatred has silently mounted up against Frank and his régime. Both in Parliament and in the highest quarters . . .

BLIX.

Oh, aren't the highest quarters a secondary consideration? His Majesty is so old and worn-out. . . .

ULVELING.

But *her* Majesty is that much more interested and active. She sent for me the other day—well, I don't know whether I ought to repeat her words—but she said that she would like to hear the opinion of an eminent and unprejudiced statesman. That interview has convinced me that she is an unusually gifted woman. She agreed with me in everything I said and she hates Frank with her whole heart.

BLIX.

I see she has never forgiven him for his sarcasm about the "intellectual milliner."

ULVELING.

His sneering tongue has secured many enemies for him. In short, there is plenty of inflammable material about and the explosion is not a thing we are going to have to wait for. . . . You would better follow my friendly advice and leave the sinking ship in time.

BLIX.

Like the rats, you mean. A flattering comparison.

ULVELING.

To join us will not be to your disadvantage. You surely understand that, when we come into authority, we will allow you to keep your subvention. We, of course, know what a government owes its adherents. But if you abso-

lutely want to support a ministry that is already doomed —have your own way. You simply risk losing your income from the secret fund, and doubtless your advertisements will be considerably diminished, too.

BLIX.

Advertisements!

ULVELING.

Don't you see that you will make yourself offensive to the business world if you do not disavow connection with Frank and his socialism.

BLIX.

Yes, but on the question of the profit-sharing law I have kept neutral.

ULVELING.

That is not sufficient. In business circles the bitterness is very great and there is a plan on to boycott in the future all newspapers that do not take a firm stand in favor of the property classes. And I know that they have special designs on *your* paper.

BLIX.

I have, perhaps, accommodated myself too much to Frank. I would not mind if it were a question of political consequences only. But if the advertisements are going to suffer . . . Do you know, I believe I will consider your proposal?

ULVELING.

Bravo! Now you are talking like the superior man you really are.

BLIX.

(*Catches sight of* PRETORIUS, *who comes in from the promenade hall.*) Look, there is Pretorius. . . .

ULVELING.

Word of honor, Pretorius—did you know beforehand what was going to happen this afternoon or did you not know?

PRETORIUS.

I have been asked that question about fifty times. And the answer runs thus: I knew it in a way, but in another way I did not know it after all.

ULVELING.

Your speech is as obscure as the Delphic oracle. And yet it is not difficult to interpret. The truth is: You did not know a thing about it, you only hate to acknowledge it.

PRETORIUS.

You may construe my words as you wish. That I cannot prevent.

ULVELING.

I understand so perfectly how hurt you must feel. We others have finally accustomed ourselves to the fact that

Frank is inconsiderate to us. But that he is willing to offend *you*, the friend of his youth, his faithful Pylades—no, that I cannot comprehend.

PRETORIUS.

You are mistaken. I have no cause to complain.

ULVELING.

No cause, you say! You, who by right of your position as the majority's whip, are the trusted agent both of us and of the government. Should not you above all people have a right to demand confidence? . . . But since you are no longer intimate with Frank, he has probably not initiated you into the secret of what he intends to do further, either?

PRETORIUS.

To that I cannot give you an answer. But you must not worry about *that*. He will doubtless continue to show himself to be what he always has been—the strongest man in our political life.

ULVELING.

Yet it is very strange how weak he has become, this strong man. It is true he has turned Parliament out-of-doors—as long as it lasts. But he shows a surprising indulgence to the honored mob. Syndicalist meetings with seditious speeches are being held, demonstration processions with red flags and revolutionary music are

being arranged. I am sure it will not be long before the capital here is not a fit place for respectable people to live in.

BLIX.

It is not much better in the provincial towns. The reports this evening are rather alarming.

ULVELING.

And he does not interfere—he, the head of the government and minister of the interior as well. He drives with slack reins and lets things go as they will.

PRETORIUS.

You may be sure he will tighten the reins when the time comes. Let the general strike come and he will soon master it—on that you may rely. . . . What do you say, Mr. Blix?

BLIX.

I, for my part, await the general strike with calmness of mind.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, you too are of the opinion, are you not, that, in the end reason and order will triumph?

BLIX.

I hope so. But I was thinking chiefly of the paper. We have made arrangements with our typesetters, so that

the strike will not touch us. And we have had a new revolving press set up, too. . . . So we are well armed for the exciting times we have ahead of us. The extra sales will probably be enormous. . . .

(ROBERT FRANK *appears at the door on the left.*)

ULVELING.

Attention, gentlemen! Here comes no other than the august Prime Minister himself.

ROBERT FRANK (*with a hasty bow to the gentlemen*).

Pretorius, I wish to have a few words with you.

(ULVELING *and* BLIX *withdraw.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

I presume that you are hurt because I did not let you know anything beforehand.

PRETORIUS.

It made no difference as to myself. The unfortunate part of the affair is that the whole majority feels affronted. The restless times make it excusable that you have put Parliament out of function. But that you did this without consulting the group leaders is looked upon as a lack of consideration toward the ministerial block.

ROBERT FRANK.

It was exactly the group leaders that I did not want to warn. They are far from reliable—all of them. Just

ask Ulveling—if he wished to, he could give you detailed information as to the conspiracy against me.

PRETORIUS.

What conspiracy?

ROBERT FRANK.

You are really the one, my good Pretorius, who should have got on the track of that. But fortunately I received warning from another quarter. The plan was simply this, that I should be put in a sack and suffocated.

PRETORIUS.

What on earth are you saying?

ROBERT FRANK.

Don't look so terrified—surely you understand that I am speaking metaphorically. The suffocation was to take place quite parliamentarily and the sack was no other than a motion. It was couched in very careful and vague terms but practically signified that my profit-sharing bill was to be laid aside and buried.

PRETORIUS.

I did hear it whispered that some such thing was afoot, but I did not pay much attention to it.

ROBERT FRANK.

And do you think you can guess who was to secure a majority for this motion? Well, in the first place the re-

actionaries, then the socialists, and, finally, a number of our own amiable so-called ministerials. A motley company, is it not?

PRETORIUS.

Permit me to remark that I have my doubts about this. I still think that it has amounted to no more than the flighty ideas of certain individuals.

ROBERT FRANK.

Now, after the coup has miscarried, the instigators will, of course, put on the most innocent airs. And the rank and file know nothing at all about it; *they* were kept on the outside and were not to receive orders until the decisive moment. That is to say, at the session this afternoon, when it was agreed that the bomb was to explode.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, of course, when you are positive about this, I must give in. But anyhow . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I have it from a reliable source. I was warned this morning and I understood that there was only one thing to do: the talk-shop had to be closed. I drove instantly to the castle and got the old gentleman to sign the edict. Not without much ado, however—he is less manageable now than he used to be. . . . Well, I don't need to tell you what happened afterward.

PRETORIUS.

No, but perhaps you will tell me what is going to happen now. What is the object of the whole thing—what do you expect to gain?

ROBERT FRANK.

What I expect to gain? The execution of my programme, of course. I have certainly declared it often enough: as head of the government I am not going to sit by quietly any longer and see our entire industry going to destruction. In the last year there has been strike after strike and things are constantly becoming worse, the country is being impaired both economically and politically. The time has come when we *must* secure tranquillity for labor by fair means or foul.

PRETORIUS.

Well enough—but *how* can one secure tranquillity for labor? Especially at such a time when the syndicalists are fully bent on a general strike. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

The syndicalists must be crushed to earth so that they will never rise again. And when *that* is accomplished the work of peace will begin.

PRETORIUS.

The work of peace, yes. But that is just the difficulty.

ROBERT FRANK.

It is not insolvable. If one goes about it in the right way. I repeat what I have said to you time and again: the point is to create solidarity, to unite employers and workmen by common interests. The workmen must become part-owners, they must be given a share of the profits. If they are to become reconciled with capital, they must, in a manner, become capitalists themselves. I see no other road to social tranquillity, and it is exactly this road to which my profit-sharing law points.

PRETORIUS.

It points to a road that no legislation has ever before trod. It has no prototype in any country.

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, we shall be the ones to offer the prototype.

PRETORIUS.

I wonder? I told you long ago what I think of this law. If any other minister had made such a revolutionary proposal, he would have been done for at once. *You* have had prestige enough to be able to take such a risk. But you could not have believed for a moment that the law would really be put into effect.

ROBERT FRANK.

And why should I have staked everything on it then?

PRETORIUS.

Say what you will—I cannot but believe that the proposal was put forth for tactical purposes only. That you wished to try to split the Labor party by it. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Nothing has been further from my thoughts in this matter than tactical motives. Tactics—I have got to the point of being nauseated at the very sound of the word, after all these years spent in coaxing and cajoling. Now, for once I am going to allow myself the luxury of walking a straight path, of acting exclusively in obedience to my own will.

PRETORIUS.

Be careful—you are putting your authority at stake.

ROBERT FRANK.

For what purpose have I gained my authority if I cannot risk it for a cause that deserves promoting? . . . They say that "noblesse oblige," but truly the possession of power does so, too.

PRETORIUS.

I am afraid there will be little power left if you continue to push your profit-sharing law. I am speaking mildly when I say that it has absolutely no sympathy in Parliament.

ROBERT FRANK.

That is just why I sent Parliament home. Until it changes its mind.

PRETORIUS.

In that case you must first get the whole country to change its mind. But business people will hear nothing of your law, because they consider it an insufferable interference with the rights of property. And the workmen look on it as nothing but a bluff, whose only aim is to do away with their precious liberty to go on strikes. So where you are to find support is beyond my understanding.

ROBERT FRANK.

The course of events will possibly teach these good people to look on my programme otherwise than they do now. Just wait and see—the reaction may come before three weeks have passed.

PRETORIUS.

And why should it come so soon?

ROBERT FRANK.

Because by that time we shall have seen the vast chaos. At least I hope so.

PRETORIUS.

You hope for a chaos?

ROBERT FRANK.

Don't you know anything about astronomy? Don't you know that it is from chaotic nebulæ that solar systems are evolved. The new is born of chaos alone.

PRETORIUS.

Well, that may be, but I prefer to keep to the earth, and there chaos is not generally considered a blessing. . . . You talk as though you don't care if everything goes to the devil. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

A certain amount of daredevil recklessness is always necessary if one wishes to accomplish in politics anything that is to make its mark.

PRETORIUS.

There is a limit to everything, and I am not at all sure that you yourself are going to escape with a whole skin from the chaos you long for.

ROBERT FRANK.

Do you think that *I* feel sure of it any more than you do? On the contrary—it is just as probable as not that I shall break my neck on this affair. But the uncertainty only makes it the more alluring for me.

PRETORIUS.

Thanks, now we have had enough; you no longer frighten me. You are simply standing there making a

fool of me—I should have suspected it as soon as you came with your vast chaos. But one never knows where one has you. You were the same mystifier even in your student days.

ROBERT FRANK.

Did you know me then?

PRETORIUS.

Did I know you? What a question!

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, for it was no more than quite occasionally that we met.

PRETORIUS.

Oh, no; we really did meet constantly. Otherwise I could not possibly remember so many characteristics and anecdotes from your youthful days.

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, those you simply invented.

PRETORIUS.

What!

ROBERT FRANK.

You manufactured them when I became minister. Before then you remembered nothing.

PRETORIUS.

Well, I am almost speechless. . . . I trust that you please to jest. . . .

ROBERT FRANK (*laughing*).

Yes, of course, you know that. Was it not you yourself who called me a mystifier? And that suddenly gave me the desire to tease you a little, old friend. . . . But here I am lost in talk and have not yet greeted my host and hostess. . . . Au revoir. . . . (*At the entrance to the promenade hall* ROBERT FRANK *meets the* YOUNG DIPLOMAT *with* JULIA CAMERON *on his arm. As he returns the young man's greeting he is seen to start and hesitate for a moment. Then apparently collecting himself he walks on.*)

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Did you notice the look he gave you, Miss Cameron? It was really quite extraordinary.

JULIA CAMERON.

And you who know how I am longing to talk to him—it is too bad of you that you did not help me to it just now.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

How could I have managed *that?*

JULIA CAMERON.

That is your own affair. With a little presence of mind . . . (*She leaves him and sits down at the left.*)

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT (*follows and sits down by her*).

Now you are unjust. . . . Mr. Pretorius, I appeal to you—was it possible for *me* to introduce Miss Cameron and the Prime Minister to each other?

PRETORIUS (*sits down also*).

No, to speak sincerely, I do not think that that would have been correct.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

There you see. . . . On the whole, in what manner you are to make his acquaintance—have you any idea as to what a difficult problem that is?

JULIA CAMERON.

It is doubtless one of those difficulties that diplomats manufacture in order to have something to do.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Let me explain myself more fully and you will be able to judge for yourself. An acquaintance is made by an introduction, is it not? Now I ask: which of you is to be introduced to the other, you or he?

JULIA CAMERON.

I really had not thought of that.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

You or he—cruelle énigme! . . . That *you* should allow yourself to be presented is impossible because of your

sex. It might be permitted in an extreme case, if Mr. Frank were a dignified old gentleman, but he happens to be a man in the prime of life. You may reply that then *he* could be presented to you, but that is by no means so simple a matter as it seems. I appeal again to Mr. Pretorius' discernment.

PRETORIUS.

I think that it would not be according to custom for the Prime Minister to allow himself to be presented to a very young lady. Unless that young lady were married.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

I admire you, Mr. Pretorius. You have found the solution. . . . Now you see how it is to be done, Miss Cameron: if you wish to make the Prime Minister's acquaintance, you must first marry one of your many adorers.

JULIA CAMERON.

Who has told you that I have any adorers?

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

As if it were necessary for any one to tell me *that.*

JULIA CAMERON.

And you think, then, that I would be content with an "adorer," as you express it? No, I am much more *exigeante* than that.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Doesn't it touch your heart when you know that you are adored? What do you demand, then, of the one whom you would choose?

JULIA CAMERON.

I demand that he shall be a man whom *I* can adore.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Whom *you* can adore? That is undeniably an extraordinary exaction. If you make such conditions I am afraid none of us shall be able to qualify. . . . But perhaps a man like the Prime Minister . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Well, what about *him?*

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

His person seems to have found favor in your critical eyes. And as he is still free and unbound . . .

JULIA CAMERON (*to* PRETORIUS).

Has he never been married?

PRETORIUS.

No, never. I could not even imagine him as a married man.

JULIA CAMERON.

But why not?

PRETORIUS.

Because he is a hermit by nature. In fact, I know nobody that has lived the solitary life to the extent that he has.

JULIA CAMERON.

But he must have relatives and friends.

PRETORIUS.

He has only one friend and that is my humble self. But he has no relatives left with the exception of a brother-in-law, the husband of a sister who is dead.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

You mean that ludicrous fellow whom he uses as a sort of secretary—Leporello?

PRETORIUS.

Yes, that is what he is called, but his real name is Winkelmann.

JULIA CAMERON.

Leporello—does that mean that Mr. Frank is a Don Juan?

PRETORIUS.

No, no, not at all. I imagine the point is that Winkelmann's appearance reminds one of a hare. The name Leporello has that meaning, you know.

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Isn't the point rather that he goes on errands that others are not willing to undertake? That the Prime Minister uses him for certain unmentionable transactions . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

How do you know that Mr. Frank engages in things that he dares not mention?

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

If he were exaggeratedly scrupulous, he would never have attained the position he now holds. . . . You who are a journalist, Miss Cameron, are certainly not unaware of the fact that no statesman can be made out of pure gold.

JULIA CAMERON.

And why not?

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

Don't you know that pure gold is too soft to use for current coin? It must first be alloyed with a number of less precious metals before it gains sufficient hardness and power of resistance. It is just the same with leading politicians.

JULIA CAMERON.

Did you discover this comparison all by yourself?

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

No, I plough with another man's ox. But this other was a man who could speak from experience.

PRETORIUS.

Miss Cameron, your wish is about to be fulfilled. . . . (ROBERT FRANK *comes in from the promenade hall with the ambassadress on his arm.*)

THE AMBASSADRESS (*motioning* JULIA CAMERON *to her*).

Oh, Julia, be good enough to come here. . . .

(JULIA CAMERON *rises and goes toward her aunt.* PRETORIUS *and the* YOUNG DIPLOMAT *disappear into the drawing-room at the left.*)

THE AMBASSADRESS.

Mr. Frank, this is my niece, Miss Cameron. . . . Julia, Mr. Frank has been so kind as to say that he would like to make your acquaintance. I have told him that you are a journalist and would be grateful for an interview.

ROBERT FRANK.

It would be a pleasure to me to . . .

THE AMBASSADRESS.

But you must not think that she is an ordinary reporter. She has studied in both Paris and Zurich and she is a doctor of philosophy or something—I don't know ex-

actly what—but she is a doctor at any rate. Yes, she is a perfect little wonder. Just think, when she was only fifteen years old . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Aunt, I beg of you . . .

THE AMBASSADRESS.

Anyhow, all this studying . . . Do you think, Mr. Frank, that it is good for young girls to be learned? My niece has become so terribly revolutionary from it—she is almost a socialist, I believe. But she pays no attention at all to me when I say: Julia, such things don't do for a young woman of your position. For I must tell you that we belong to a good, old family. A *very* highly respected family from the Southern States.

JULIA CAMERON.

But aunt . . .

THE AMBASSADRESS.

Couldn't you dissuade her from this way of thinking, Mr. Frank, when you talk to her? She is so enthusiastic about you since she saw you in Parliament this afternoon. We were both in a box and I had secured seats in the front row, for in the back one sees nothing on account of the hats. What do you think of the huge hats women are wearing, Mr. Frank—ought not they really to be forbidden

by law? And when you were about to read the paper you had in your hand and everybody was so excited about it, you simply stood there and smiled. That is to say, *I* did not notice that you did, but Julia said: "Did you see how he smiled, aunt?"—and she has not been able to forget it since. What was there about Mr. Frank's smile that made such an impression on you?

JULIA CAMERON.

Now, aunt, you must really . . .

THE AMBASSADRESS.

Mr. Pretorius said that you always smiled that way in your student days when you played a really good trick on some one or other, but my niece insisted that that smile meant something much deeper. . . . Won't you smile, Mr. Frank, so that I can see? . . . No, I don't discover anything special. . . . But now I must go in for the quadrille. I am going to dance it with the Russian ambassador and he is probably looking about for me. . . . (*She goes out into the promenade hall.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

You do not dance, Miss Cameron?

JULIA CAMERON.

Indeed I do, most gladly—I may say, I am passionately fond of it.

ROBERT FRANK.

Unfortunately, I do not dare ask you to dance with me. I have always been a bad dancer and now am entirely out of practice besides.

JULIA CAMERON.

Men of mark never dance well, I am sure. At least I have noticed that men who are perfect dancers are seldom very intelligent. I wonder if dancing is not an accomplishment that is inconsistent with a highly developed brain.

ROBERT FRANK.

You mean that the one kind of balance excludes the other? I am sorry that I am not qualified to express an opinion on this scientific question. But, at any rate, I am very grateful to you for the amiable manner in which you explain my imperfections as a dancer.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, now you are making sport of me. But, perhaps, my remark was somewhat stupid. . . .

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT

(*Comes from the drawing-room at the left.*) I beg a thousand pardons for making so bold as to interrupt. But perhaps you remember, Miss Cameron, that you promised me the quadrille and it is about to begin.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, fancy, I had forgotten. I am extremely sorry, but I have danced the entire evening and now I am dreadfully tired. You will excuse me, won't you? You can easily find another partner. . . .

THE YOUNG DIPLOMAT.

I am very sorry. . . . (*He withdraws.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

You said you were tired, Miss Cameron. Shall we not sit down? (*They sit down at the right foreground.*)

JULIA CAMERON.

Mr. Frank, there is something I want so much to say to you. But I do not know that I dare. I feel so embarrassed in your presence. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Couldn't you persuade yourself to say it anyhow?

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, I really do not believe I can resist . . . Of course, I know you do not attach any importance to what an insignificant young woman thinks of your politics. But I do so much want you to know how I admire you for your proposal to give workmen a share of the profits. For a man like you to jeopardize his position for the sake of workmen—it is grand, unprecedented. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Miss Cameron, I do not wish to appear to your eyes other than I am. I have not put forward my proposal for the sake of workmen.

JULIA CAMERON.

Not for the workmen? But for whom, then?

ROBERT FRANK.

For industry in general. It is not sentimental consideration that has actuated me, but simply my sense of economy. It disgusts me to see all this waste of forces caused by these eternal strikes, and it is on that account that I am trying to straighten things out.

JULIA CAMERON.

But the conditions for workmen will be improved by it.

ROBERT FRANK.

Certainly, the workmen will benefit by my profit-sharing law. But so will the employers, too. Otherwise, I should never have had anything to do with the matter.

JULIA CAMERON.

And I really believed you were a socialist.

ROBERT FRANK.

I was in my younger days. What appealed to me in socialism was just exactly its demand for the organization

of forces. But I soon learned that the masses of the party are not concerned with that sort of thing. *They* are not actuated by anything except poorhouse ideals.

JULIA CAMERON.

So now you have discarded socialism?

ROBERT FRANK.

Not uncompromisingly. Socialism? Well, I have no objection to it, but it must not be carried out by proletarians. It demands a dictatorship—a dictatorship of intelligence.

JULIA CAMERON.

But isn't it true that the party is certainly gaining more and more intelligent followers? At the university I was struck by the number of enthusiastic adherents that socialism has among the students.

ROBERT FRANK.

There is a great deal of talk about the enthusiasm young people feel for great and noble things. But, as a rule, what attracts the young is not the ideal side of a question. No, it is the sensational. And sensations do not last long.

JULIA CAMERON.

Unfortunately, that is probably true—in many cases. But for some people, I think socialism is more than sensation. They join its ranks, because it is consistent

with their sense of justice. For we can never get away from the fact that the distinction made between the high and the low is inordinately unjust.

ROBERT FRANK.

It is right that there is a distinction between high and low. Those that are under must have a living goal to look up to, one tempting enough to strive for. What sets capabilities in motion is the sight of distances and the desire to cover them. No distances, no advancement.

JULIA CAMERON.

But I also was thinking of the artificial distances—the unmerited differences that depend on pure chance. *They* surely cannot be defended. For one cannot say that a human being is in himself less worthy because he is born in a lower class of society.

ROBERT FRANK.

You must not believe that I nourish any such prejudices. My experience teaches me just the contrary—that the basic elements are surprisingly similar in all classes. Rich and poor, masters and slaves, high life and low life—taken on an average they are all very much the same kind of rabble.

JULIA CAMERON.

But when nature has made them equal, why should one class live in superfluous luxury and the other suffer want?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, why? There you touch the salient point. I readily acknowledge that it is unjust. But justice, for that matter, is a side issue.

JULIA CAMERON.

Is justice a side issue?

ROBERT FRANK.

There are certain considerations that outweigh those of justice and they are cultural considerations. And culture cannot be advanced except with the help of an élite.

JULIA CAMERON.

I have seen a good deal of the so-called best society and I do not think it deserves the name élite.

ROBERT FRANK.

Nor do I mean the so-called best society by the word élite. Prosperity, education, refined habits—all this is only the soil and atmosphere in which the flower of the élite can bloom. The élite itself is composed of those who show us how far and how high a human being is capable of reaching.

JULIA CAMERON.

But such élite creatures may also be born in a lower class, may they not?

ROBERT FRANK.

They may be born there, but they cannot continue to exist there. Their ideas, their deeds feel the need of hearing an echo; they need to be surrounded by cultured people who can afford to interest themselves in something besides their daily bread. Namely, for the superfluous, which in the end is really the most necessary, for *it* is the only thing that can reform a two-legged creature into a human being.

JULIA CAMERON.

And on that account the privileged classes are to be protected?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, on that account only. Not for their own sakes, but to have a milieu which secures light and air for the highest human types. This is much more important than that the great masses should be a little better dressed and fed than they are now. For no more than three quarter humans can be formed from *them* anyhow.

JULIA CAMERON.

I am beginning to understand why you are in favor of the sway of the upper classes. But, anyhow . . . Well, perhaps the present order of things is rational, but there are so many things about it that my feelings rebel against.

ROBERT FRANK.

It is only for lack of something better that I am in favor of the sway of the upper classes. The mind alone should have full sway. . . . Once in my youth there floated before my eyes a future. . . . However, it is of no consequence.

JULIA CAMERON.

O, do continue. What sort of a future was it?

ROBERT FRANK.

I imagined a state of things where the élite we spoke of was to be the new sovereign. I thought that *it* could form a covenant that would by force of mind be unconquerable. But it was not to misuse this power for personal advantages, but, on the contrary, to employ it to elevate the others. The élite was to unite in a common task—to take unto itself this groping, immature humanity and reshape it into the highest perfection attainable.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes! That is what we should have. The élite should form a covenant! And such a man as you should be the leader of it.

ROBERT FRANK.

Unfortunately, I am unable to accept your too flattering request. There is, in fact, a hitch in the plan and that is that the élite are *incapable* of forming a covenant.

JULIA CAMERON.

Why so?

ROBERT FRANK.

Because that would be exactly in opposition to its nature. Élite creatures have—each and every one of them—a highly individual stamp peculiar to themselves; and, of course, it must be so, for otherwise they would not be the élite. But it is just this peculiarity that prevents their joining together. . . . On the other hand, the rest of mankind, the human mean, those who are made on one and the same last, *they*, indeed, are as if created to move in herds. Only look at our political parties.

JULIA CAMERON.

You mean that the party system is a sign of intellectual inferiority?

ROBERT FRANK.

In a way, yes. Men find each other in common interests and the common is of necessity the ordinary. And the more ordinary men are, both they and their aims, the greater chance there is of party formation and hence of power and success too. . . . It is this that makes politics so disgusting and sometimes so hopeless.

JULIA CAMERON.

And yet you chose politics as your life work. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Up to now it has been only a métier for me.

JULIA CAMERON.

But there must be moments, nevertheless, when it fills your thoughts. As this afternoon when you stood there in the Parliament. It must have made you feel very proud to be the one on whom all eyes were fastened and to know that you needed to say only a word to put the whole country in movement.

ROBERT FRANK.

I assure you that at exactly that moment my thoughts were very far away from all politics.

JULIA CAMERON.

Is it possible!

ROBERT FRANK.

Have you never discovered that at an important moment your attention may run away with you? Perhaps you are trying to concentrate yourself on one thing alone and the circumstances demand that you should, but your interest becomes involuntarily snared by some object that has nothing to do with the situation. Have you not had such an experience?

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, now that you mention it, I do remember once . . . No, I shan't repeat it, it was so meaningless. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, yes, let me hear.

JULIA CAMERON.

It was only a bagatelle, something that happened to me once when I was taking an examination. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And what was it that happened then?

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, it was only that the professor had asked me a question just as my eyes fell upon a big fly that was creeping across the table in such a strangely slow manner that I could not keep from staring at it, so that it absolutely hypnotized me and I forgot to reply. . . . It was only that—oh, how stupid! . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, it was something similar that happened to me to-day. But with this difference that it was not a fly that drew my attention. No, it was a young woman. And can you guess who it was? It was you, Miss Cameron.

JULIA CAMERON.

I?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, you were sitting in the box opposite my seat. . . . As soon as I saw your face a memory was awakened in me—a memory such as comes to us in dreams. Strange!

As in a flash of lightning we seem to remember what we have never experienced. . . . Though, who knows? . . . Miss Cameron, are you sure we have never met before?

JULIA CAMERON.

Where could that have been?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, where? Not in the state of being we call life and reality. But perhaps in another existence for which we cannot account. . . . Time and time again while we have been sitting here talking, I have had the feeling of recognition.

JULIA CAMERON.

Your pleasure in the recognition cannot have been very great. For what *I* have said in the course of the conversation is so extraordinarily trivial that I cannot help but be ashamed of it.

ROBERT FRANK.

You have no cause for that. And anyhow it does not depend on what is *said*. It is not words alone that reveal us to each other. The soul has other means of communication. . . . (*A confused noise is heard from without.*) What can be going on out there? . . . O, yes, I remember. . . . (*Guests are seen hastening from the promenade hall in the direction of the ballroom.*)

JULIA CAMERON.

There must be a mob down in this street. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

No, the noise does not come from the street below. (*He rises, draws a curtain aside, and opens the window.*) It is at the corner, in the great square on which the ballroom opens. . . . (JULIA CAMERON *goes toward the window.*) Lean out and you can see how the people are gathering. . . . (*From without a few voices begin to sing, more and more constantly joining in until it sounds as though there were hundreds. The song ceases. The tramp of horses' feet, screams, and shrieks are heard.*) There are the mounted police. They are clearing the square.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, the poor creatures! Oh! I do hope there will be no accidents.

ROBERT FRANK.

No, orders have been given to deal leniently with them. Don't be anxious, Miss Cameron.

PRETORIUS (*comes hastily in*).

Do you know what has happened?

ROBERT FRANK.

I think I can about guess it. But perhaps you have had a closer view?

PRETORIUS.

I was in the ballroom when the hubbub broke loose. Of course the dancing ceased. Everybody rushed to the windows to see what was afoot. The mob stood below and insulted us. Among other things they cried out: "Down with the Pearl Queen." And then sang the "International" into the bargain. For such a thing to happen in front of the embassy of a foreign power! Why, it is a perfect scandal.

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, it is an unpleasant affair. But the crowd is scattered and it is all over now. The police had been stationed in the side streets and were ready to interfere.

PRETORIUS.

You knew, then, that a demonstration had been planned? But, then, why was it not stopped beforehand? Had it not been better to interfere at an earlier stage?

ROBERT FRANK.

You do like to ask questions, Pretorius; you are too inquisitive. Sometimes, I pursue my own course, you see. I have my little secrets, into which I initiate no one—unless I might one day confide them to Miss Cameron . . . for I hope this is not to be our last meeting.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, no; you know I am in town as a newspaper correspondent and as . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And then you will want an interview, won't you? In fact, your aunt told me that you do. And our conversation this evening—that was not an interview.

JULIA CAMERON.

Then I may be allowed to call on you soon? But I am very much afraid of causing inconvenience. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Not at all. You will be welcome at any time. I shall always be glad to receive you. Now that I have discovered that we are old acquaintances, it is only natural.

PRETORIUS.

Indeed! Have you met Miss Cameron before?

ROBERT FRANK.

I am quite sure that I have. . . . But I propose now that we shall go look up the ambassadress and Mr. Hunter. I owe it to them to express my regret over the occurrence.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, do. . . . The more I think of it, the more painful

it seems. . . . That it could not have been prevented—that is beyond my comprehension. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Are you still occupied with your speculations? Remember what I said about the vast chaos. This is only the prelude.

PRETORIUS.

The vast chaos? Well, now, I do begin to fear that you are really in earnest. . . .

(ROBERT FRANK *smiles and offers his arm to* JULIA CAMERON. *They all proceed toward the promenade hall.*)

SECOND ACT

An office room of the Department of the Interior. In the centre, a long council table covered with green cloth, surrounded by high-back chairs. On the walls, portraits of former cabinet ministers, all in uniform. To the right, two widely separated bay windows. By the farther window, a desk. Farther forward on the same side, a round table on which newspapers and magazines are lying. A few arm-chairs near it. To the left, a swinging door into the private secretary's room.

ROBERT FRANK *is standing by the council table, looking through some papers.*

THE JANITOR (*opening the swinging door, announces*).
His Excellency, the Minister of Public Works.

ROBERT FRANK.

Hasn't Mr. Winkelmann come back?

THE JANITOR.

Mr. Winkelmann has not yet made his appearance, your Excellency.

ROBERT FRANK.

Admit his Excellency.

(*The* JANITOR *disappears and the* MINISTER OF PUBLIC

WORKS *comes in.* ROBERT FRANK *motions to him to sit down. Both seat themselves at the council table.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, my dear colleague, what new evil tidings have you to serve up to me?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Unfortunately, evil tidings are the order of the day—or disorder one should call it, perhaps. . . . I have a list here of the happenings of the last twenty-four hours. . . . (*He opens a portfolio.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

Is it the usual menu? Telegraph-poles pulled down, telephone wires cut? Thanks, you need not trouble yourself as to those things. Have you nothing of extraordinary interest to report?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Indeed, I have. A dynamite bomb was discovered in the Eastern Station two hours ago. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I know that already. The clockwork of the bomb was set for eleven.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Yes, it might have blown up the whole building. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

No, that it could not have done. . . . There was a fault in the mechanism that would have prevented the explosion. It is the same with this attempt as with the others before—only botch work, carried out by irresponsible individuals. . . . Just as with the small attempts at sabotage here and there—nothing but child's play, nothing of any weight.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

At any rate, the sabotage is harmful enough.

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, but if there were any organization behind it, it would be managed much more forcibly. No, the leaders themselves are trying to prevent havoc.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

In the end they will have to relinquish all hope of bringing the rank and file to its senses, for the fermentation grows stronger every day. There were many collisions yesterday. The non-striking workmen have had vitriol thrown over them and blood has been shed several times.

ROBERT FRANK.

They simply have not shed enough blood. All these rows are patchwork —there must be more of it before we

can lift our arms for the decisive blow. The frenzy has not developed with the rapidity that was indicated at first. . . . Do you remember what violent excitement there was before the strike broke out? And I let the rioters caper at will—now, come, confess that you wondered at my patience. . . .

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Yes, to speak plainly, all of us wondered.

ROBERT FRANK.

I held myself in abeyance because I thought the abscess would ripen all the sooner in that way. But I was mistaken. Almost as soon as the general strike was proclaimed, the syndicalist leaders changed their tactics and advised caution. They are wise enough to know that they become the weaker party the moment they give us an opportunity to use military force.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

And yet any other outcome than that fanaticism will prevail is not possible. The exasperation has risen several degrees since the railroad men subject to conscription were put into compulsory service.

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, they did not believe we would dare take that step. And it was somewhat hazardous, for suppose the strikers

had returned the compliment with a general refusal. But how far can we reach with this makeshift? Can you manage more than half of the usual traffic?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Hardly that even. But even if we keep things going for a time, it is bound to end with our having to stop the trains for lack of coal. There are not enough supplies on hand—another consequence of this cursed strike. I hardly dare think of what will happen *then*. Even now there is a dearth of all sorts of necessities. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Clearly it is no pleasure to be minister of public works these days. Mails have become irregular and I suppose you do not dare answer for telegraph and telephone any longer, either.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

No, the strike's contagion is spreading everywhere. Even the office clerks are threatening to join the workmen —they are dissatisfied with their circumstances and are using the situation in order to make impossible demands. And the municipal works are beginning to close, too: gas-works, electric works, one after another. . . . Good God, what a future is facing us! Without mechanical power, without light, without supplies of food! Famine, epidemic, revolution, ruin. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Stop, my dear colleague, stop! You are a new Jeremiah with this voluptuous wallowing in lamentations! If you keep this up we shall both end by committing suicide. . . . Certainly, things do look awkward but, believe me, in spite of everything, we need not despair.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Perhaps not yet. But if things go as far as we have every reason for fearing they will go . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

We simply shall not *allow* them to go so far.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

But how can we stop it?

THE JANITOR (*appearing, announces*).

His Excellency, the Minister of War. (*The* MINISTER OF WAR *comes in, shakes hands with the others, and sits down.*)

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

I have just come from the castle. I was summoned to an audience.

ROBERT FRANK.

And what was talked about there?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

His Majesty is very anxious over the state of affairs.

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, he is always that. But he surely did not send for you just to talk about his troubles in general. It was probably a special matter, was it not?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

Yes. It is the edict about the state of siege that worries His Majesty. His august self hoped that it would not be put into effect and declared that could it be avoided in any way . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And you entered into a discussion of this question?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

I could not very well decline to do so when His Majesty opened the subject.

ROBERT FRANK.

Hm. . . . You know well, my good general, that I consider it rather unfortunate for my department ministers to express themselves on political questions when I am not present. . . . Well, and what was the matter with the edict? Why should it not be put into effect?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

His Majesty said that he had really never intended signing it. He had been led to do it by being first taken

off his guard. . . . I beg pardon, but I am simply repeating the expression he himself used.

ROBERT FRANK.

Don't mention it. I am so accustomed to having the old gentleman attribute almost anything to me that I am not affected by it any more. . . . Taken off his guard, was he? Did he not tell you then how he happened to sign the document?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

I was not informed of the particular circumstances.

ROBERT FRANK.

It is quite true that he resisted in the beginning every time the state of siege question came up. None of my remonstrances bore fruit. But then the demonstration in front of the American embassy took place. It proved that the mob did not even recoil from insulting the ambassador of a foreign power. That affair made an impression on him and I got his signature.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

But up to now it has not been put into execution.

ROBERT FRANK.

No, I left the date blank so as to have this weapon to fall back on at the proper moment. I have waited a long

time, but now the hour has come: to-day a state of siege is to be proclaimed over the whole country.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

To-day?

ROBERT FRANK.

To-day at twelve o'clock.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

But why to-day, especially?

ROBERT FRANK.

Because to-day an event is to take place which will make it necessary to resort to the most extreme measures. I shall not tell you now what it is to be, but you will know soon enough.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

But I am not at all prepared for this! I must, of course, issue instructions to the military commanders instantly. But what directions shall I give? We have not even conferred about it yet!

ROBERT FRANK.

It is quite unnecessary that we should. *I* have given the instructions. They were sent to the generals in command a little while ago.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

You don't mean that they were sent direct?

ROBERT FRANK.

No; of course through the intermediary of the War Department. I had the division chief send them on while you were at the castle. There was no time to be lost and, strictly speaking, the matter really did not concern you.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

Not concern me?

ROBERT FRANK.

Not directly. If we were at war with another nation, I would not contest your competence. But in this case we are confronted by internal disorders and, therefore, it is the Minister for Home Affairs who must decide what provisions are to be made. The only thing the War Minister has to answer for is that the troops required are in good condition. And I rely on that's being the case.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

The troops are excellent in every respect. The syndicalists might have spared themselves the trouble of smuggling their newspapers and pamphlets into the barracks. Of course, there are some bad specimens among the soldiers, but the general tone is irreproachable.

ROBERT FRANK.

That is in accord with the information I have received from other sources. Then there is no reason why we should not go straight ahead regardlessly.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

No, as far as that is concerned there is nothing in the way . . . not from *that* point of view. . . . But His Majesty expressed a wish that I must mention. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

What wish was that?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

His Majesty assumed that the moment for the state of siege was approaching. And his august self was of the opinion that the riot should, in as far as possible, be quelled by the police and only occasionally by the military —in exceptional cases only.

ROBERT FRANK.

And the reason he probably gave was that the army ought not to be made unpopular by using it against the people.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

Exactly that. And His Majesty added that, *if* it should be necessary to use the military, at least it must be seen to that they proceed with all possible leniency.

ROBERT FRANK.

Perhaps they are to march out with the fire hose.

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

Of course, in my own mind I could not help but have my humble doubts. But I certainly could not say so right out. I am an old officer, and when I stand face to face with the head of the army . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

What head of the army?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

I don't understand. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Come, now! Was not a certain august lady present during the audience?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

Yes, Her Majesty was in the room.

ROBERT FRANK.

Then I readily understand who this "head of the army" was. . . . But what answer did you give to this strange demand?

THE MINISTER OF WAR.

I replied that His Majesty's wish should be fulfilled in as far as it stood in my power.

ROBERT FRANK.

As I have explained to you, the matter lies absolutely outside of your domain. The promise you gave, therefore, does not bind you in the least. And it binds me just as little, for it was not made on my behalf. . . . (*He rises.*) Gentlemen, I have nothing more to say to you at present. (*The others rise also.*) But I request you to meet here at two o'clock sharp for a conference. Our other colleagues have also received a summons. We shall discuss important questions. . . . (*The* MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS *and the* MINISTER OF WAR *retire.* WINKELMANN *comes in.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

Here you are at last. Where the deuce have you been so long?

WINKELMANN.

Wasn't it you yourself that sent me off? Haven't I had to trudge all the way to the East End, there and back on foot? You know well enough that there isn't a street-car nor a cab to be had. And I haven't got any private automobile at my disposal, either. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

It would have been imprudent to show yourself in an automobile in the East End just now, even if you had one. You would have been too conspicuous, Leporello, and the East-Endites might have become offensive.

WINKELMANN.

They were that, anyhow. As luck would have it, I met a fellow who knew me—the husband of a charwoman whom I had dismissed for laziness. He decided to avenge himself and so he roared to those who were standing about: "Here is one of those cursed extortioners who skim cream from the sweat of the workmen." Did you ever hear such nonsense? I wish to Heaven it had been true—what he said about me, but *I* certainly have never skimmed cream from anything.

ROBERT FRANK.

And then what happened?

WINKELMANN.

Instantly I was surrounded by a raging mob. The worst of them was a female monster without a nose, who thrust her skeleton mug right into my face and howled that she would drink my heart's blood. I can still smell the stink of brandy that came from her horrible jaws. Whew! I am about to vomit. . . . Yes, you can laugh all right, but if you had been in my place . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Excuse my hilarity, Leporello, but I need a little amusement in these serious times. And you surely don't expect me to take this little adventure to heart, for your precious skin has been saved, I see.

WINKELMANN.

Just barely. At the last moment a police patrol passed and they let me join them. I was on my way home then and had fortunately finished my errand.

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, now, let us come to the point—you did find the man at the place agreed upon?

WINKELMANN.

I did and I must say that the man and the place suited each other for the same reason that a hangman's leer looks well in a murderer's den. Just imagine me, a former philologist and head master, obliged to have anything to do with that sort of specimen. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, you are a pretty wily old rogue yourself. . . . But let us hear what the outcome of the meeting was. Can he really be of any use to us? Was there anything in these papers he wants to sell?

WINKELMANN.

He insisted that they contained enough proof to put all the syndicalist leaders in jail. But I read them through and couldn't see anything particularly compromising in them. At any rate, they are not worth the

shameless price he asks. I told him so, too, but he gave me such an ugly look that I hastened to promise that you would take the offer under consideration. And mighty glad I was when I escaped from his hole. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

No, I thought right away that the whole thing was humbug. There are certainly proofs to be had, but we must look some place else for them. And in an extremity we can do without them, too. . . . Yes, you may go now, Leporello. But stay in the anteroom, because I want you, and not the janitor, to announce the visitors. I am expecting soon a most weighty deputation, which can demand the honor of being introduced by nobody else than yourself, my most worthy private secretary.

WINKELMANN.

Who is that?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, you just ought to know. You will simply fall backward. . . . No, I shan't tell you—I want you to be taken by surprise. . . . (WINKELMANN *goes out, but appears immediately afterward at the door.*)

WINKELMANN.

Pretorius is here and would like to speak with you.

ROBERT FRANK.

Let him come in. (WINKELMANN *retires and* PRETORIUS *comes in.*) Good morning, Pretorius. How can I serve you?

PRETORIUS.

First, permit me to ask you a question. This building is guarded by soldiers. What is the meaning of it?

ROBERT FRANK.

So you have discovered that.

PRETORIUS.

As I came in by the main entrance, I saw that the gate to the inner court was open for a moment. It was closed immediately afterward, but I had had a glimpse of a detachment of gendarmery that stood marshalled up in there. It looks as though you expected a siege. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

If I expected such a thing I certainly would not content myself with that handful of gendarmes down in the courtyard. Heaven knows, it is natural enough to think we need a guard these days. But don't let that bother you, Pretorius; just sit down and tell me what your errand is. (*Both seat themselves by the round table at the right.*)

PRETORIUS.

I come here as an emissary from the Employers' Union. There was a meeting of the leaders last night and they

agreed unanimously that the present state of affairs is untenable. So it was decided that the government should be privately requested to take the first step toward mediation. The employers are prepared to come to an agreement.

ROBERT FRANK.

On what basis?

PRETORIUS.

Well, on that point they were not yet quite clear. But they were of the opinion that the first thing to be done was to open negotiations, for some compromise or other could always be hit upon.

ROBERT FRANK.

I do not see that there is room for compromise here. What the struggle is concerned with is a question of power, on which the employers can not make any concessions without at the same time surrendering unconditionally.

PRETORIUS.

One ought at least to let it be put to the test.

ROBERT FRANK.

Even if, against all probability, an agreement should be reached, it would simply contain the germs of new quarrels. Or do you imagine that the syndicalists will rest on their laurels satisfied? This time they say to the employ-

ers: "You will be permitted to use unorganized labor to no greater extent than the unions approve." The next time they will go a step further and demand that the organized laborers shall have full and undisputed sway. The point is that they will force the labor masses one and all into the organizations and thereby get their tenter-hooks into every business undertaking. Class struggle will continue to the bitter end. . . . No, I am not going to help prolong that misery. I will not take part in any mediation.

PRETORIUS.

You talk exactly as if there were a choice left us. But there *is* no choice; we *must* come to an understanding with the strikers or a national catastrophe will come to pass. Remember! All our chief industries are just about paralyzed: coal-mines and mineral works are apparently extinct, the brass works are closed, the woollen mills, too. In one place it is the laborers that are lacking, in another the raw material or the fuel is giving out. And in the meantime, foreign competition gets our orders and supplants us in the market. Just the one week during which the strike has lasted has brought incalculable harm on the country—eight days more, and we must face the crash.

ROBERT FRANK.

I know all this just as well as you do. But within eight days, the situation will have changed.

PRETORIUS.

There is certainly no time to lose, for the panic has already begun. Capital is fleeing the country, people are storming the banks, even the savings-banks. Shares in industries are going down—I myself have lost quite a considerable sum in the falling market. . . . If I could only realize my papers before they become quite worthless. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

If you follow my advice, you will not sell, but do the opposite—buy. You will make a brilliant deal by it, for shares in industries will soon rise again.

PRETORIUS.

Are *you* buying?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, of course not. It would be improper for me while I am minister to speculate on the exchange, especially when I am myself influencing the market. But, of course, I can always give others a friendly hint.

PRETORIUS.

You think, then, that things are going to take a favorable turn? Well enough, but where did you get this encouraging hope? Have you by chance a magician's wand hidden about you? For in this matter you certainly can do nothing by the exercise of power. What is so desperate in the present state of affairs is that it is impossible to

get at these people. For they aren't doing anything except making use of their right not to work.

ROBERT FRANK.

Certainly the syndicalists' position is unassailable so long as they keep within the limits of the law.

PRETORIUS.

And they are not going to let themselves be lured outside of it, either. They will not do you that service.

ROBERT FRANK.

You forget one thing—when the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain.

PRETORIUS.

That I do not understand.

ROBERT FRANK.

You will very soon come to understand it.

WINKELMANN (*comes in*).

A young lady has been waiting for some time in the anteroom. She wants me to ask if she may come back later and what hour would be convenient. (*He gives* ROBERT FRANK *a visiting card.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

(*Glances at the card, rises and goes, to the door, which he opens.*) I beg you to come in, Miss Cameron. I am ex-

tremely sorry that you have had to wait. Had I had the least idea that you were there . . .

JULIA CAMERON (*appears at the door*).

But am I not disturbing you? You gentlemen were doubtless deep in a conference. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

To receive a visit from you is of much greater consequence than all the conferences in the world. (WINKELMANN *goes out.* PRETORIUS *has risen; salutations are exchanged.* ROBERT FRANK *offers* JULIA CAMERON *an armchair, and all three seat themselves.*)

JULIA CAMERON.

I must really beg forgiveness for my obtrusion. But we journalists cannot always be so considerate as we should like. My paper in New York has sent me a cablegram that necessitates my coming here.

ROBERT FRANK.

Necessitates? Do you think, then, that it is so disagreeable to come to see me?

JULIA CAMERON.

Naturally, I hesitate to do so when I know how dreadfully busy you must be these days. You have more important things to occupy you than giving information to a newspaper correspondent.

ROBERT FRANK.

I shall give you all the information you want with much pleasure. I will do more than that. I will give you an opportunity of outdistancing all the other correspondents.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, how nice of you! But how?

ROBERT FRANK.

In a little while there is to take place here in this room an interview that will be decisive for the course of events. If you wish, you may be present as eye and ear witness. . . . You, too, Pretorius, as long as you are already here.

PRETORIUS.

An interview you say? With whom?

ROBERT FRANK.

With the Syndicalists' Council of Ten. Levinski sent me a message last night to the effect that he and his colleagues wished to meet me here at noon. So I am expecting them at any moment.

PRETORIUS.

And you haven't told me before! But then the matter is by no means so hopeless! *They*, too, will doubtless make terms—they as well as the employers. And so they

are coming to ask the government to mediate. And when both parties ask it, you cannot possibly refuse.

ROBERT FRANK.

Pretorius, how can you be so naïf? If they were going to ask for fair-weather terms, they would do so through an intermediary and not appear here themselves with a flourish of trumpets. When Levinski arranges this kind of procession with the Council of Ten in corpore, you may be sure he is simply striking an attitude in order to thunder forth an ultimatum.

JULIA CAMERON.

I was with Mr. Levinski yesterday and he said then that no power on earth could prevent the syndicalists from reaching the result they want.

ROBERT FRANK.

You hear, Pretorius. . . . So you have talked with Levinski. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, several times.

ROBERT FRANK.

Several times, even? But you have not come to me before to-day. . . . And what impression have you received of him?

JULIA CAMERON.

I am really undecided. At least he is interesting—somewhat of a charmeur. Everybody says, indeed, that he resembles Lassalle.

ROBERT FRANK.

At least he does outwardly. And it pleases him to cultivate that likeness, too. For he undoubtedly has one quality in common with Lassalle—monstrous vanity. . . . You called him a charmeur, Miss Cameron. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Perhaps "charmeur" is not the right word. But we Americans have an expression that is more suitable—we should say of a leader like Mr. Levinski that he has magnetism.

ROBERT FRANK.

Magnetism for the crowd—quite true. The sounding phrase, the cock-sure self-confidence, the brutal fanaticism—these are always attractive to the masses. But it is difficult for me to comprehend that they should have an influence on *you*.

JULIA CAMERON.

What influences me is his intense personality. He doubtless is vain, as you say, and he is a phrase maker, too. But one is always aware of the fervid soul that lies behind

his small weaknesses. He is aglow with a faith for which he would gladly die. If you could only see him as a martyr. . . . Yes, he ought to become a martyr.

ROBERT FRANK.

Ought he to become a martyr? Why?

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, because as a martyr the heroic in him would come to light—his greatness would reveal itself completely.

ROBERT FRANK

It seems as though you are fascinated by him, Miss Cameron.

JULIA CAMERON.

There *is* something fascinating about him—that I do not deny.

ROBERT FRANK.

Then he has probably succeeded in converting you to syndicalism? Though perhaps conversion was not so difficult with the opinions you already held. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

I don't know that the syndicalists would acknowledge me as one of theirs. But I must confess many things that I have seen and heard among them since I have been about in this country have affected me deeply.

ROBERT FRANK.

Have you been travelling?

JULIA CAMERON.

Mr. Levinski advised me to. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Mr. Levinski again. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

I have visited the industrial towns and been present at the laborers' meetings and talked with them in their homes, both with them and with their wives. They are all suffering from want, for the contributions from the strikers' funds do not reach far, and there is a dearth of everything as well. But, nevertheless, there is no impatience, not the least thought of defection. On the contrary, there is a harmony and discipline that we others might model ourselves after.

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, I know well enough: when the Council of Ten sends out an order, they obey like a file of soldiers.

JULIA CAMERON.

But do you not consider that admirable?

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, it is not so remarkable. Remember that obedience is in the blood of the lower classes. They have been

trained to duck from childhood—a necessary accompaniment of economic dependence. They used to obey the representatives of the upper classes, while now they allow the Syndicalist Committee to order them about.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, but that difference is an enormous one. Their obedience is no longer blind; now they subordinate themselves with an object in view—they know that they must if they are to struggle forward to freedom and equality.

ROBERT FRANK.

To equality, yes, but not to freedom.

JULIA CAMERON.

I think you do the workmen injustice. Until we have talked with them we have no idea of what a fund of idealism there is in the whole movement.

ROBERT FRANK.

I should rather say that the movement is materialistic. For what is it that all the thoughts and aspirations of these people look to? A state of things with the highest wages possible and the shortest work-day possible. In addition, cheap dwellings, free dispensaries, support in old age and all the other conveniences a feeble imagination can picture. That is the way things are in their promised land.

JULIA CAMERON.

And can one blame them for wanting these things, with their position so uncertain and full of anxiety?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, I do not blame them for that. On the contrary, what I think is the matter with them is that they do not demand *enough*.

JULIA CAMERON.

In time they will doubtless aim at a higher goal. But first they must try to improve their conditions.

ROBERT FRANK.

Of course they must. But let us look on the matter as the quite natural thing it is and not attribute to it a greater significance than it has. The workmen's programme is made as much of as if it had furnished the whole of society with a new gospel.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, but it *is* a certain kind of gospel, too—a message of salvation.

ROBERT FRANK.

But salvation cannot come from those who need help themselves. It is a mental aberration to believe that it is the proletarians that can bring about a social renaissance.

JULIA CAMERON.

No, not the proletarians as they are, but the spirit that is going to bring brighter days to the proletarians. It is sympathy, self-sacrifice, the longing to do good unto others that will cause society to be born again. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Do good unto others—do you know whom I consider the true benefactors? The great egoists that have been occupied exclusively with their own life-work. Each one of these has done more for human progress than all the hospital nurses of all the centuries put together.

PRETORIUS.

Miss Cameron, with certain reservations, I must declare that I agree with my friend Frank in all essentials. But, on the other hand, I understand and appreciate your standpoint, though it is just the contrary.

ROBERT FRANK.

As always, you are the angel of conciliation.

WINKELMANN (*comes rushing in*).

Levinski and the others are in the anteroom—the entire Council of Ten. . . . They demand to see you! What shall I do?

ROBERT FRANK.

Why are you trembling? Just let them in. They are not going to eat us. (WINKELMANN *goes out.* ROBERT

FRANK *and* PRETORIUS *rise.* LEVINSKI *and the other members of the Council of Ten come in. They take up positions at the left,* LEVINSKI *in front.*)

LEVINSKI.

Robert Frank, there are moments when we feel as though history were knocking at our doors; we are now passing through such an hour of visitation. And we are not alone in appreciating the significance of the situation; the eyes of the entire world are fastened on this land. Proletarians and capitalists alike await, in breathless excitement, the outcome of this strike, which in extent and consequences is without parallel.

In the struggle which is now being carried on the chances seem to be very unequally divided. *We* possess nothing but our faith and our enthusiasm, *you* have at your command both money power and military power—you have gold on your side, you have steel on your side. And yet it is *we* who are going to triumph. For of what use is gold when indispensable labor will not permit itself to be bought, and of what use is steel when the strikers will not give you an excuse to use it?

We no longer build barricades—we are not so naïf. We have discovered a more effectual method of gaining our point: the serene tactics of the folded arms. We already see results: capitalism is slowly dying of sheer anæmia, and it will soon come to us begging for peace—it cannot do

otherwise; it is only a question of time. He who cannot foresee the approaching triumph of the proletariat must be blind, indeed.

And you do foresee this, too, Robert Frank, but you are trying to postpone the unavoidable issue. A hopeless enterprise on which I would never waste a word, were it not that you have gone about this in a way that must provoke the sharpest protest.

Do I need to tell you to what I am alluding? The government has many sins on its conscience, but the most hideous of them all is that crime which it has just committed toward our comrades of the railroads. These men had laid down their work—which they had a full right to do—no objection could be raised either morally or juridically. And so the government resorts to a shameful trick. A mobilization order transforms the strikers subject to conscription into soldiers and under threats of discretionary punishment they are put in the railroad service against their will and in opposition to their convictions.

This method of procedure has filled us with loathing and anger. We ourselves have not departed one inch from the law's domain; but we have no intention of allowing our opponents to fight us with the help of chicanery—chicanery just as perfidiously planned as it was brutally carried out—and the Council of Ten has come here to-day to demand that the government instantly recall this indefensible order and give back their freedom to our mistreated comrades. Beware of refusing this our request—do not

forget that we speak in the name of the entire army of workmen.

Robert Frank, we await your reply.

ROBERT FRANK.

You make the statement that you speak in the name of the entire army of workmen. In reference to this, I will remind you that only forty per cent of the workmen are on strike, and therefore the Council of Ten represents only a minority.

LEVINSKI.

But this minority is struggling for the true interests of the workmen and it forms a force with which those in power must reckon. When forty per cent of all laborers strike, that is quite enough to threaten the whole business life of the country with ruin.

ROBERT FRANK.

I acknowledge that. But as I, for my part, do not wish that business life shall be ruined, it goes without saying that I have made provisions to the contrary. I must especially take care that the trains are kept running, and therefore I have not the least intention of recalling the order that has roused your displeasure.

LEVINSKI.

Have you also considered that this experiment is a dangerous one? In your place, I should think twice before I

permitted traffic to be looked after by summonsed syndicalists. In that way, the railroads may soon become an unsafe method of transportation.

ROBERT FRANK.

I am prepared to expect that; in the beginning, there will be cases of both sabotage and still worse things. But I will guarantee that such an example will be made of every man that is caught that the others will not have any desire to continue.

A SYNDICALIST.

Why not say it straight out—you will simply have him shot?

ANOTHER SYNDICALIST.

Certainly he will. Even if it should be a workman with wife and children. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

A workman with wife and children should not enter upon that sort of adventure. If he does so anyhow, then he must take the consequences.

FIRST SYNDICALIST.

And such people try to make us believe that they have sympathy with us workmen.

ROBERT FRANK.

I have never stated that I have any sympathy with the workmen.

FIRST SYNDICALIST.

God help us, he says it straight out.

SECOND SYNDICALIST.

Well, such bravado! . . .

LEVINSKI.

We shall not fail to make the public acquainted with that shameless confession. You have held out to the workmen the hope that they were to share profits with the owners. Now every one will be able to see how much your bill is worth. You have thrown away the mask of friendliness to labor and acknowledge that the heart plays no rôle in your social policy.

ROBERT FRANK.

I did not need any particular warm-heartedness in order to originate my bill—only a little intelligence. It does not take much brains to know that all these conflicts do not help industry but that what is necessary is harmonious co-operation between capital and labor. And I want to give the workmen partnership and a share of the profits in order to secure this co-operation. Both parties would be the gainers by that.

FIRST SYNDICALIST.

Maybe so—but the employers the most, eh?

ROBERT FRANK.

Undoubtedly, the employers would derive benefit from it.

FIRST SYNDICALIST.

Thanks, we won't have any of that.

SECOND SYNDICALIST.

No, by Heaven, they shan't rake in any more than they've got now. For that's the object of this law, isn't it?

ROBERT FRANK.

The object is to secure tranquillity for labor throughout the country.

FIRST SYNDICALIST.

Well, but we don't want tranquillity! The fight must take its own course. . . . You think you can smooth us down with your "profit sharing." Oh, no, we are not going to content ourselves any longer with crumbs from rich men's tables. We will have the whole thing; for we workmen are the ones that shoulder the burden, and so we are the ones that will do the directing and managing.

ROBERT FRANK.

Workmen are not fit to direct and manage. They can tear down, but they cannot build up again. They could probably succeed in ruining the rich, but that would not make the poor prosperous. The result would be only confusion and failure. (*A murmur from the* SYNDICALISTS.)

LEVINSKI.

We can talk of the result when the time comes. We shall not have to wait long for it, for I can inform you that the fulness of time is at hand. The great laboring people demand their place in the sunshine; they will no longer allow themselves to be excluded by a few privileged ones; they will no longer live and suffer for the enrichment of the extortioners. There has accumulated in the depth of the masses explosive material that is stronger than powder and dynamite: an unconquerable desire to rise against injustice, a holy indignation that is going to lay in ashes the social fabric of the extortioners. No minister will be able to prevent this—neither you, Robert Frank, nor any other hireling of infamous capital.

ROBERT FRANK.

I have my suspicions as to what it is that makes capital so infamous in the eyes of certain men. I wonder if it is not usually the circumstance that they have not any of it themselves. (*An outburst of anger from the* SYNDICALISTS.)

LEVINSKI.

Comrades, let us reply to these low insinuations of the Prime Minister not with interruptions but with silent contempt. Let us quietly listen while he continues to sneer at us: it will only steel our revolutionary will all the more.

FIRST SYNDICALIST.

No, by Heaven! We don't care about being steeled in that way—letting him stand there and insult us to our faces!

ROBERT FRANK.

I do no more than express my sincere opinion. If what I say is distasteful to you, please remember that it was not I who requested this meeting. . . . Anyhow, it has lasted longer than necessary. I have already given the reply you demanded, and so I do not think there is anything more to discuss. We shall never agree, anyhow.

LEVINSKI.

No, we see plainly that between you and us there is a chasm over which a bridge can never be built. . . . Now we are going; but you will live to see that I speak truth—we shall see each other again, Robert Frank, we shall meet at Philippi. (LEVINSKI *and the other members of the* COUNCIL OF TEN *withdraw.*)

PRETORIUS.

Thank God, that is over! I stood the whole time perspiring with anxiety over what this exchange of words might lead to. One moment I was really afraid that it would come to blows. But I must say you were pretty blunt in your expressions. And there was one thing you should absolutely not have said—that about warm-heartedness. Why on earth did you do it?

ROBERT FRANK.

What did you say, Pretorius? I was not listening. . . .

PRETORIUS.

I said it was imprudent of you to talk as though you had no feeling for the workmen. It will go further, of course, and all your opponents will use it against you.

ROBERT FRANK.

I have made greater efforts for the cause of the workmen by my bill than any of my opponents.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, perhaps you have, but what good is that when people do not believe you did it from sympathy? The public demands of its leaders that they have a throbbing heart. It belongs, so to speak, to a modern politician's equipment.

ROBERT FRANK.

Does *your* heart throb for the workmen, Pretorius?

PRETORIUS.

My heart has *had* to throb for them since they got the right to vote—for them and for all the other voters, whom I, as a politician, have to take into account. And *you*, too, ought to lay stress on warm-heartedness—at least you ought not to deny it openly. . . . But you are not

hearing a word of what I am saying. You are so absent-minded. What is it you are listening to? (WINKELMANN *rushes in. Through the door, which he leaves open, comes a noise of loud voices quarrelling far away.*)

WINKELMANN.

Something is happening out in the vestibule. It must be the syndicalists up to something! I did not dare look out, for there is a tramping and shouting going on there, as if a horde of wild men were loose!

PRETORIUS.

Great God! What does this mean? Do you suppose they are going to pull everything down about our ears? . . . You exasperated them, Frank—the only thing wanting now is for them to use violence on us!

ROBERT FRANK.

No fear of that. . . . Now the noise is ceasing. . . .

PRETORIUS.

Yes, it really is. They have gone away. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

No, they are still here—but under safe-keeping.

PRETORIUS.

Safe-keeping?

THE OFFICER ON DUTY (*comes in*).

I beg to announce that your Excellency's orders have been carried out. While the syndicalists were having their audience, I placed my platoon in the vestibule as commanded. When they came out they were overpowered without much difficulty. There was some resistance, but not such as to cause any one to be injured. According to your Excellency's order, they are now in the library under lock and key.

ROBERT FRANK.

And the transportation to prison?

THE OFFICER.

It will soon take place. The patrol-wagons and escort are on the way already. A telephone message has just come.

ROBERT FRANK.

That is good.

THE OFFICER.

There is one thing I must take the liberty of reporting. The prisoner Levinski insists on being brought into your Excellency's presence. He declares that it is of great importance.

ROBERT FRANK.

Does he? Well, let him come in, then.

THE OFFICER.

He should be accompanied by one or two of my men, should he not?

ROBERT FRANK.

Of course. But I will not have your men in here. Say to the gendarmes that they may wait in the anteroom while I am talking with him.

THE OFFICER.

Very well, your Excellency. (*He goes out.*)

PRETORIUS.

Do you not think this rather ill advised? Who knows what that desperate creature may hit upon! He has probably got a revolver on him. You really ought to let the gendarmes accompany him in here!

ROBERT FRANK.

That would not be befitting either for him or for me. Your instinct should tell you that, Pretorius.

PRETORIUS.

Do you think there is anything at all befitting about this episode? Pardon my outspokenness, but this sudden arrest is too theatrical not to cause offense to temperate politicians. My long experience as a parliamentarian has taught me to value regular procedure, and I confess that my sense for the correct . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Save your remonstrances until later—I hear them coming. (*Short silence.* LEVINSKI *appears, his clothes in disorder.*)

LEVINSKI.

How dare you let your soldiers lay hands on us? Do not you, a jurist, know that what you are doing is criminal? It is illegal; it is false imprisonment!

ROBERT FRANK.

It may be imprisonment but it is not illegal, for a state of siege had been proclaimed just before it was done.

LEVINSKI.

State of siege! This is getting better and better! But at any rate, you have not the slightest pretext for putting us under lock and key!

ROBERT FRANK.

I have the extremely valid reason that you and your colleagues are exerting a form of activity that is ruining the country. It is my duty to put an end to this disorder.

LEVINSKI.

We do not acknowledge such subterfuge. We demand to be released, and that instantly! Otherwise we will not answer for the consequences.

ROBERT FRANK.

What consequences do you mean?

LEVINSKI.

The proletariat will rise in righteous anger. Do not try to provoke it. Beware, I say! Up to this time the struggle has been carried on with moderation. But if you persist in this tyranny you will get war to the knife.

ROBERT FRANK.

I am prepared for that. But just let it come—I do not fear the outcome.

LEVINSKI (*gazes silently at* ROBERT FRANK *for a moment*).

Now I understand what you are driving at. Now I see through your infernal plan. . . . Why this cowardly arrest from ambuscade? Because you want to rouse the workmen; because you want to instigate them to do their worst. You can accomplish nothing against peaceful strikers; but if you can succeed in bringing on war, you hope that the movement may be crushed by force of arms. . . . But it may be that you have miscalculated. We syndicalists have arms, too—stores and stores of them—not cannons and guns but much more effective instruments of destruction. It is meant that they shall not be employed until the hour of necessity arrives, but then they will be used with a vengeance, you may be sure—then all the powers of annihilation will be set loose.

ROBERT FRANK.

This information is interesting. It appears that the Council of Ten is not so innocent as it has hitherto pretended to be. . . . Well, perhaps you may be cross-examined on the subject before the court martial.

LEVINSKI (*with uplifted arm*).

And you, Robert Frank, will be tried before another court! Judgment day will be held over you and the entire bourgeoisie! A judgment day dyed with blood and flames—the sunset of capitalism, the dawn of the proletariat! The great army of workmen, marching between burning palaces and over the dead bodies of the tyrants, will enter into the kingdom of justice! (*He goes out. A short silence.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

I see that you are taking notes, Miss Cameron. But you must be uncomfortable where you are sitting. Will you not seat yourself here at the desk?

JULIA CAMERON (*rises*).

Yes, thank you, if I may be allowed. . . . It is a cablegram to my paper and it is getting to be rather elaborate. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I shall see that it is sent as a government telegram, so that it will get off as soon as possible.

JULIA CAMERON.

You are too kind. . . . (*She goes over and sits down at the desk.*)

ROBERT FRANK (*to* WINKELMANN).

What are you standing there waiting for? Why don't you go into your own room?

WINKELMANN.

I dare not stay in there alone so long as those awful creatures are in the library next to it. . . . Excuse my sitting down, but I have had such a shock that I am trembling in all my limbs. . . . (*He sinks into a chair.*)

PRETORIUS.

I certainly don't wonder at it. It made the hair rise on one's head to hear him utter his threats of murder and fire. . . . Do you think there is anything in what he says? That they have made these unpleasant preparations? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

In such case perhaps it will be worse for them than for us.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, you spoke of bringing them before a court martial. And what then? I mean in case they are found guilty? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, you can easily imagine what the judgment would be.

PRETORIUS.

But the others will retaliate, they will take a horrible revenge! Now, do listen to reason—you *must* not lead us into all these terrors. . . . You are overworked, Frank; I cannot explain it otherwise. It is your nerves that are failing—I have seen it before now. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, you have seen me nervous before but only after Parliament meetings, remember. I could easily jump entirely out of my skin after I have listened to the talking-machines thrash over old straw for four or five hours on end. . . . But to-day I don't feel the least trace of nervousness.

PRETORIUS.

Nevertheless, I cannot think but that what you are undertaking is a leap in the dark.

ROBERT FRANK.

What else can I do? Wasn't it you yourself who recently brought me the message that the present state of affairs is untenable? Eight days more of this and we face the crash—I am only quoting your own words.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, but I want you to untie the knot, not cut it in two.

ROBERT FRANK.

It *must* be cut in two; there is no other way.

PRETORIUS.

Yes, but could you not cut it in two in a little more decent way? You are challenging the criticism of all right-thinking people. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Don't you think I know that? Don't you think I know them, these faint-hearted souls, these dyed-in-the-bone humbugs? They have doubtless no objection to reaping the benefits of my acts, but they will nevertheless shake their heads disapprovingly—for they will not have lost anything by it: they will have both the fat profit and their good consciences in safe keeping. . . . No, I have no illusions. Even though I should come out victorious, there will be a blot on my name in the eyes of all these good people. But I don't take that into consideration—I throw my reputation to the wind.

PRETORIUS.

Such indifference to public opinion is unwise, to speak mildly.

ROBERT FRANK.

Viewed from the usual point of view, it is unwise. But there is a sort of wisdom to be found, Pretorius, which rises above the commonplace. What *it* seeks is not the little external prosperity which you acquire by making a covenant with society and circumstances.

PRETORIUS.

What does it seek, then—this marvellous kind of wisdom?

ROBERT FRANK.

It seeks the blessed peace of mind that one feels when one speaks and acts in perfect harmony with the voice of one's inner self. This higher instinct of self-preservation is the true wisdom—even though it may seem to outsiders to lead to ignominy and destruction.

PRETORIUS.

I have very little faith in that sort of wisdom. I prefer the more current sort.

ROBERT FRANK.

Have you, then, never even once heard this imperious call—a voice that is within you and yet at the same time over you? . . .

PRETORIUS.

Both in me and over me? No, thank God, I never have. . . . And you say you are not nervous. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I should have known it beforehand—you cannot understand me.

JULIA CAMERON.

(*Who has been listening to the conversation for a while, springs from her chair and hastens toward* ROBERT FRANK.)

But *I* understand you! For the first time I understand you fully! That I could have doubted for a moment—oh, how sorry I am! . . . Now I know that what you want to do is the only right thing, and even though the whole world should be against you, I know you are right, a thousand times right! . . . Of course, I ought not to interfere in this. But I cannot keep silent—I *must* say it to you! . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And I thank you for saying it.

PRETORIUS.

Miss Cameron, I am thunderstruck. It is hardly half an hour since you were eagerly defending the cause of the workmen and now you are taking Frank's part with still greater eagerness. With the best will in the world I cannot reconcile these things.

JULIA CAMERON.

And who demands that *you* should be able to reconcile them? *I* can do so, so perfectly.

PRETORIUS.

Well, of course, feminine logic is not accountable. But feminine goodness, Miss Cameron—ought not *that* to forbid your encouraging Frank in this ill-omened enterprise? Just consider who it is that will suffer—not only the guilty ones, but the wives and children, too. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

You appeal to my goodness—are you so sure that I am good?

PRETORIUS.

You recently proclaimed your sympathy for the weak. As indeed is befitting a woman.

JULIA CAMERON.

Sympathy for the weak—does that exclude admiration for the strong? No, the one feeling is just as womanly as the other. . . . You always speak of "woman," Mr. Pretorius, as if you knew us in and out, but I believe the feminine soul is quite foreign to you.

PRETORIUS.

Indeed. And may I ask from what you draw that conclusion?

JULIA CAMERON.

I cannot imagine that any woman has ever made a confidant of *you.*

PRETORIUS.

Well, I think it is about time I left. The atmosphere in here is loaded with an electricity that I prefer to avoid. . . . Good-by, Frank—I trust you will not come to rue

the day you undertook this. . . . My respects, Miss Cameron. . . . (*He goes.*)

ROBERT FRANK (*to* WINKELMANN).

I presume that you have recovered from your fright. Isn't it about time that you went back to your own room? (WINKELMANN *rises reluctantly and goes out.*)

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, I shall go, too.

ROBERT FRANK.

Already?

JULIA CAMERON.

We have kept you too long. . . . But my cablegram . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

It lies there, does it not?—I shall send it immediately. . . . But there is something I must say to you before we separate. This that has just taken place—appearances were against me then, but *you* saw deeper and took my side. I wonder if you have any idea of how much that means to me now at such a moment? More than I shall be able to repay.

JULIA CAMERON.

But what must you think of me, that I without the least ceremony . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

What I thought of you? The same that I thought the first time we met. Do you remember the afternoon in Parliament?

JULIA CAMERON.

Do I remember!

ROBERT FRANK.

I did not even know your name, and yet I had a feeling that you had always been close to me.

JULIA CAMERON.

I had the same feeling. And I pictured to myself how we should meet each other and how a day should come when I should be allowed to be your friend. But then when I was introduced to you at the ball all my self-confidence vanished. Oh, how frightened I was and how my heart beat!

ROBERT FRANK.

But if you desired that we should become friends, why was it, then, that I have not had sign of life from you before to-day? Was it our conversation that evening that made you shy? Did I let fall any remarks by which I unknowingly wounded you?

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, no, it was not anything like that that prevented my coming.

ROBERT FRANK.

What was it, then, that prevented you?

JULIA CAMERON.

I cannot tell you that.

ROBERT FRANK.

Well—but when you finally did come here I had the impression, nevertheless, that you had glided away from me—I mean that you had taken sides with the others. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Because I defended the workmen? I do that still. The workmen are right in their way. But you are right in a higher sense. It became clear to me while you were talking to Mr. Pretorius about the inner voice. And I understood then, too, what it was that voice demanded—I understood that it reminded you of that of which you had once dreamed. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

That of which I had once dreamed?

JULIA CAMERON.

Don't you remember telling me that? The élite was to form a covenant for the elevation of mankind.

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, and I also explained to you why the élite *can* not form a covenant.

JULIA CAMERON.

No—but since there can be no covenant, then an individual must take up the task. And *you* have had the courage to shoulder the burden. . . . Let the world believe that *you* are only a cold and practical statesman, but *I* know better, I know that you are an idealist. . . . And I admire *you* for it, I admire *you* boundlessly!

ROBERT FRANK.

I *am afraid* that *your* admiration would cool if you could cast a glance into certain secret corners of my soul. But indeed there *is some* truth in what you say. Perhaps I *am* an idealist in a way.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, who if not you? Have you not risked everything in order to carry out an idea? You have had a vision that has given you no rest, you have in spirit imagined a social state where human beings can work under more livable conditions, and now you will force a way for it by every possible means without consideration of others, without consideration of yourself. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

How strange that you should say this to me now!

JULIA CAMERON.

Is it strange?

ROBERT FRANK.

It is always strange when the chimeras created by our longings become transformed into reality. For I *wanted* you to say to me just the things you have said—I yearned for it even before we had exchanged words. For I recognized you—it was one of those glimpses from another existence that sometimes without warning make their way into the dark chamber of every-day life. . . . Do you remember my telling you this the other evening?

JULIA CAMERON.

There is nothing you have said to me that I do not remember.

ROBERT FRANK.

And isn't it strange?—involuntarily I connected your apparition with a name that was, as it were, a presage of what you were to become to me. . . . I heard afterward that they called you Julia. But the name that instinct whispered to me was another, and now I understand that it was the true one. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

And what is my true name?

ROBERT FRANK.

For me your name is Stella. . . . Stella, a star, the star of my future. . . . You appeared at the moment when a struggle that is to be decisive for my fate was in

full sway—call it superstition, if you will, but I detect in it a mysterious connection. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

A star is a guide; a star is something to be looked up to —no, the name does not suit *me*. . . . But I shall adopt it, anyhow. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Do I understand you aright? You will use this name?

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, I will use it from this moment.

ROBERT FRANK.

Then it is pleasing to you?

JULIA CAMERON.

Well, I said that I do not think it suits me. But I have a special reason for adopting it.

ROBERT FRANK.

And that reason is? . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

I would rather you should guess it.

ROBERT FRANK.

But suppose I guessed wrong? I should not like to risk that. . . .

WINKELMANN (*comes in*).

The officer on duty is outside.

ROBERT FRANK.

Ask him to wait a moment.

WINKELMANN.

He says that he has an important report to make. I think it is about the syndicalists.

ROBERT FRANK.

Tell him to wait, do you hear? (WINKELMANN *disappears.*)

JULIA CAMERON.

No, it will not do now for me to stay any longer. Good-by!

ROBERT FRANK.

Just one word more. I *must* know why you are going to call yourself Stella.

JULIA CAMERON.

I cannot tell you. It is absolutely impossible.

ROBERT FRANK.

You will not tell me now. But the next time we meet? Will you promise me? For we shall meet again. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, I wonder. I do not know whether . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

You do not know? Are we not to meet any more? Why, of course we are!

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, perhaps. . . . But I must go now. Good-by!

ROBERT FRANK.

No, not good-by, but au revoir!

THIRD ACT

The study in the PRIME MINISTER'S *official residence. Along the walls, which are covered with embossed leather, there are bookcases six feet high. In the background, a swinging door. At the left, a window and before it an enormous oak writing-desk. Forward on the same side, a cupboard. At the right, a sofa with table and chair in front of it.*

WINKELMANN *sits at the writing-desk occupied with a number of documents, which he arranges in packages.*

BLIX *puts his head in through the door.*

WINKELMANN (*springs up*).

Who is that? What do you want here? . . . Oh, is it only you?

BLIX (*comes nearer*).

I gave you a good fright, didn't I, Winkelmann?

WINKELMANN (*sits down again*).

Yes, I go all to pieces at the least opportunity.

BLIX

(*Draws a chair up to the writing-desk and seats himself.*) It isn't to be expected that you should not be nervous.

Almost everybody is, after all the terrors that have happened since we last met. And you especially in the course of your official duties must have seen strange things and at close range. . . .

WINKELMANN.

I have not really seen much of it. For the truth is that I stayed in the cellar during most of the time.

BLIX.

In the cellar? That is the last place I should have chosen. For suppose the house had been blown up, you would have been there under the ruins. Buried alive—Ugh, disgusting!

WINKELMANN.

I thought of that, too; but what could I do? I simply could not endure to hear all the awful things that were going on. The mutterings and thunderings as if an earthquake were taking place, and at night the glow from the burning buildings. . . .

BLIX.

Yes, and the screams of the wounded down in the street and the sight of the bodies that were carried off on stretchers—I shall never forget the three days it was going on. But now that it is over, I would not have missed the interesting experience.

WINKELMANN.

Do you call it interesting? But did not your paper suffer from it, too?

BLIX.

Yes, our paper got a bad name because it was thought to be the haunt of the scabs, and so we got our little bomb as well as the others. Our offices were pretty badly damaged; my private room, too, where I was sitting at exactly the moment.

WINKELMANN.

But you were not injured, though.

BLIX.

Escaped as by a miracle. Fortunately, the explosion killed nobody but an old lady who had come up to talk to me. . . . After an experience like that, one begins to believe again in a special providence.

WINKELMANN.

Well, I think the special providence ought to have spared us all these horrors. Why, it was just like a nightmare—I can hardly realize it yet.

BLIX.

No, there certainly was a tinge of unreality about the whole of that witches' Sabbath. It seems incredible that

our old town should have been devastated by a raging horde—that wholesale destruction of churches, theatres, museums, and warehouses— I felt as if we had been transferred hundreds of years back.

WINKELMANN.

Yes, it reminded me of the Goths and the Vandals in ancient Rome.

BLIX.

These were much worse than the Goths and Vandals: they were pure beasts of the jungle. It was worst in the outskirts—I could tell you things that would make your blood run cold. . . .

WINKELMANN.

Did you venture into the outskirts?

BLIX.

No, indeed, I did not—that was much too dangerous, but I sent a reporter out, a clever young fellow—you should hear him tell of the murders the rabble committed. Piles of bodies lay about, and the way they were maltreated! For the beasts were not satisfied with killing their victims, they tortured and mutilated them—the women were the worst. . . .

WINKELMANN.

Ugh! The women. . . .

BLIX.

When he got out there they were still at it. The rabble was supplied with hand-grenades and they threw them wildly at the troops, letting them fall where they would. Just fancy their having hand-grenades, too!

WINKELMANN.

Yes, the syndicalists had a whole arsenal of murderous instruments. Levinski boasted of that even before the fighting began.

BLIX.

But they got their punishment afterward, too. My reporter happened to see a platoon standing facing a dozen prisoners lined up against a house wall, when suddenly the word of command was given, the soldiers fired, and the entire dozen were attended to in a twinkling. And this scene was repeated time and again. . . . I would like to know how many human lives on both sides this affair has cost—it must go up in the thousands. . . .

WINKELMANN.

Levinski prophesied true when he said there would be war to the knife. He threatened this the day he was arrested.

BLIX.

Levinski, yes. . . . And yet he, the leader, was the one to be spared while judgment was executed on all his col-

leagues. . . . What is the real meaning of his having been pardoned?—I would like to know very much. Perhaps Frank has confided it to you?

WINKELMANN.

No, Frank has not confided anything to me— You will have to ask him yourself. However, you can not talk to him now. He has gone some place in the country and is not coming back before evening.

BLIX.

I know that and it is just why I am here now. It is you whom I wish to talk with. I would rather not meet Frank these days when I am obliged to abuse him. . . . I suppose it is as well to keep away from him just now, anyhow, isn't it?

WINKELMANN.

He is just as usual. I see no change in him.

BLIX.

That is very strange. I should think he would be quite beside himself at this sudden change of front. To fall to such dizzy depths as he has done—just after having reached the summit of his career!

WINKELMANN.

Yes, you may well say so.

BLIX.

It seems like a dream to me that less than a week ago the whole bunch of us were prostrating ourselves before him. There was nothing too great for us to call him—"the represser of syndicalism," "the reconstructor of tranquil labor," "the saviour of society." He was actually dictator.

WINKELMANN.

A dictator like Sulla. . . .

BLIX.

And now he has fallen and accusations are pouring in on him and all parties and all papers are hunting him down—yes, my paper, too, although I don't take part in it with any pleasure. But when all is said and done, it is his own fault.

WINKELMANN.

Yes, it is hybris that has brought him this misfortune.

BLIX.

Who is it that brought him this misfortune? Is there a woman in the case?

WINKELMANN.

No, I said "hybris"—that is a Greek word that means arrogance.

BLIX.

Oh, yes, I remember it from my school-days. One can see that you are an old philologist. Yes, indeed, it certainly was arrogance that made him convene Parliament again and try to force it to pass his cursed profit-sharing bill. We thought that he had surely done with that hobby-horse by now. . . . To want to make the workmen part-owners in industry after what had happened was too bold a challenge to the government parties.

WINKELMANN.

And yet it looked for a moment as if he were going to have his way.

BLIX.

Yes, the majority was just on the point of giving in. They gnashed their teeth with rage, but they had not got over their fright and they thought they could not get on without Frank. He had every chance of winning, but then he ran against that little bump that turned over his wagon. . . . Were you in Parliament the day the end came?

WINKELMANN.

No, I never go there.

BLIX.

It is too bad that you did not get to see the farce. . . . When Frank had finished his great speech Ulveling demanded to be heard—I would not have missed his bitter-

sweet face for any price. You see it was intended that he should propose a vote of confidence on behalf of the majority. He has denied it since, but I know positively that it is so. . . . Fortunately for him, he had barely risen when the interruption came. . . .

WINKELMANN.

It was quite a young fellow that interfered, was it not?

BLIX.

Yes, the youngest of the assembly—Benjamin, as they call him. . . . You should have seen the effect it had when he sprang up and shouted: "Tell him we will have nothing to do with his law! No compromise with the incendiary rabble!" That loosened the pent-up feeling. "Down with the incendiary law! Down with the dictator!" resounded from every corner of the room. For the next quarter of an hour the hall was like a turbulent sea. But in the meantime Ulveling sat there writing. He transformed his proposal from rose-pink confidence to pitch-black lack of confidence, and that was the trick that made him Prime Minister.

WINKELMANN.

Has he been appointed yet?

BLIX.

Didn't you know it? Yes, he has been appointed at last—it happened at noon. It was no easy job to form

the new government, for all of the group leaders wanted a share of the spoils and the result is a hodgepodge enough to give one a stomachache to think of. But it makes no difference—life has now dropped back into the old folds.

WINKELMANN.

For others, perhaps, but unfortunately not for me.

BLIX.

No, of course, Frank no longer needs a secretary. And, besides, even if he did, he could not afford it. He has no money as far as I know.

WINKELMANN.

Not a shilling.

BLIX.

And his future income will not be much to boast of, either. So he can do nothing more for you. . . .

WINKELMANN.

To be sure, he has promised to take care of me for the present. But his own future is so uncertain. . . .

BLIX.

Yes, it is. Perhaps he will be prosecuted and sentenced or must leave the country. . . . You ought not to depend on support from Frank.

WINKELMANN.

No, I suppose it will come to my being left entirely without resources.

BLIX.

Don't lose courage—there will be some way out. . . . You were a teacher in your day, were you not? . . .

WINKELMANN.

Yes, I had even got so far as to be head master.

BLIX.

Would you not like to be that again?

WINKELMANN.

I would like it well enough—but it cannot be.

BLIX.

You mean because you resigned under somewhat tiresome circumstances? Oh, that is nothing. We can cast a veil over that old story. And if it does not do to give you a position as teacher, then you will get something else instead. For there is a powerful man who is highly interested in your welfare. . . .

WINKELMANN.

Is that true? Who on earth could that be?

BLIX.

No other than the present Prime Minister.

WINKELMANN.

Ulveling! But he does not even know me. . . .

BLIX.

That has nothing to do with the matter. He was talking about you a little while ago in my presence and I can assure you that he is not indifferent to you. However, you will soon hear it from his own lips. He is already here in the house.

WINKELMANN.

Is he here in the house?

BLIX.

Yes, it is quite natural that he is impatient to see his official residence. When one has gone about for twenty years aspiring to move in! . . . And now he is going the rounds accompanied by Pretorius.

WINKELMANN.

So Pretorius is with him! . . .

BLIX.

He and Pretorius are inseparable now.

WINKELMANN.

Just fancy that Ulveling will take an interest in me. Great Heavens, why did you not tell me so before?

BLIX.

Instead of detaining you with a lot of talk—say it right out; I shall not be insulted. . . . To tell the truth, I have sat here all this while and made conversation about anything and everything in order to draw the time out.

WINKELMANN.

But why did you want to draw the time out?

BLIX.

In order to be present when you and Ulveling meet. I am curious to see what will be the outcome of this encounter—I have my own personal reasons. . . .

WINKELMANN.

I don't understand a blessed thing of all this.

BLIX.

No, naturally not, but listen and I will explain it to you. . . . As you know, Parliament has appointed a commission the object of which is to make Frank harmless forever. It is to trace down all the deeds of darkness which they say, either rightfully or wrongfully, he committed while he was Prime Minister.

WINKELMANN.

Yes, so I have heard; but what has that affair got to do with either you or me?

BLIX.

A tremendous lot. In fact, it concerns both us and Ulveling and still others. . . . But here he is already. . . . (*ULVELING and* PRETORIUS *come in.* BLIX *and* WINKELMANN *rise.*)

BLIX.

May I be allowed to present . . .

ULVELING.

It is not necessary—I know who this gentleman is. . . . (*To* WINKELMANN.) I can rely on what I have been told, can I not—that Frank is not expected back for a while yet?

WINKELMANN.

He will not be back before evening, your Excellency.

ULVELING.

Good, so we can sit in peace and comfort. . . . (*He and* PRETORIUS *seat themselves at the desk while* BLIX *takes a seat at the table at the right.*) Ah, it is a blessed thing to sit down. I have been on my legs for several hours now. . . .

BLIX.

It must be sweet to rest on the cushions of power.

ULVELING.

It is too sweet, I see. These upholstered chairs are not for me. Pretorius—I shall have them sent away when I

move in. I have told you before that I suffer from an illness that has been aggravated by my sedentary life. . . .

PRETORIUS.

A sedentary life of tireless labor. You have contracted this illness in the service of the public weal.

ULVELING.

Yes, of course, that is a consolation, but it is cursedly unpleasant all the same. (*To* WINKELMANN.) You say that Frank is not coming back before evening. What is it he has on hand? Do you know where he has gone?

WINKELMANN.

He has gone to the country, your Excellency, to look for a house.

ULVELING.

Yes, it is doubtless difficult for him to find quarters here in town.

WINKELMANN.

It has proven quite impossible, your Excellency. People will not rent to him because they are afraid attempts may be made on his life.

ULVELING.

He receives many threatening letters, does he not?

WINKELMANN.

Piles of them, your Excellency. The scrap basket there is quite full of them.

ULVELING.

Oh, take one out and let me see it. (WINKELMANN *takes a letter from the scrap basket and hands it to* ULVELING.)

ULVELING (*reads*).

"The sword have you seized, by the sword shall you die." . . . There is no more here. It is an unpractised hand, but it is the voice of justice. Yes, the sense of justice is deeply rooted in the minds of the common people.

BLIX.

I hope this sense of justice is not going to utter itself at our expense. We are sitting in an unsafe place—who knows, perhaps in a moment or two we may be regaled with a bomb intended for Frank.

ULVELING (*springs up*).

The beasts! Would they really dare? . . .

BLIX.

Oh, no, the days of bomb-throwing are over—Frank has seen to that. It was only a little joke I permitted myself to crack.

ULVELING (*seating himself again*).

A rather inappropriate joke! (*To* WINKELMANN.) But tell me, what impression does it make on Frank that people avoid him as if he had the plague? He knows in his heart that he is crushed and done for for all time, does he not? Can one see it on his face, in his manner in general?

WINKELMANN.

No, externally he is just as usual, your Excellency.

ULVELING.

Externally, that may be. But you can stake your life on it that it pricks and scorches internally.

BLIX.

At least, let us hope so.

ULVELING.

What do you mean by that?

BLIX.

The same as I presume your Excellency means—let us hope that the suffering may chasten his soul.

ULVELING.

One never knows when you are speaking seriously, Blix. . . . What do you think about it, Pretorius? Don't you think that it cuts him to the heart day and night?

PRETORIUS.

I am perfectly sure that it does.

BLIX.

Yes, of course, you who have been intimate with him from youth must know him best.

PRETORIUS.

I have never been intimate with Frank. All that talk about our early friendship is a fable put in circulation by I don't know whom.

BLIX.

No, really? There, you see how easy it is to be misled. Then, of course, the report about the service Frank is supposed to have done you the other day is a fabrication, too.

PRETORIUS.

What sort of service is he supposed to have done me?

BLIX.

I have heard a little bird say that it was he who advised you to enter upon the financial deal that has made you a millionaire.

PRETORIUS.

I must protest against the expression "financial deal." It is true that I bought a considerable number of industrial shares, but I did not do so in the hope of personal gain.

BLIX.

Indeed! So you did not buy them in the hope of personal gain! But then, why did you buy them?

PRETORIUS.

Because I considered it my duty as a citizen and as a patriot.

BLIX.

You considered it your patriotic duty to become a millionaire?

PRETORIUS.

I thought you were intelligent enough to understand what I meant. The fall in industrial shares threatened to bring a national catastrophe on the country and so it was necessary to cause a rise in the market and quicken up life on the Exchange. With this object in view, I placed myself in the front ranks as an example to be followed.

BLIX.

But if you wanted to be a good example, why did you not appear in the open market? It is said that you bought the shares secretly and that you got them for a song.

PRETORIUS.

Oh, you know how people talk—especially the envious ones, those that did not succeed in getting in the field early enough.

BLIX.

Well, they do say, too, Mr. Pretorius, that it was not very difficult for you to succeed because Frank drew your attention to the opportune moment.

PRETORIUS.

Frank is not the man whose advice I would wish to follow. He is much too unbalanced for that. I have known for a long time that he is not normal.

ULVELING.

Say crazy, Pretorius, absolutely out of his senses. Here he goes and without the least ceremony opens Levinski's cage so we have got that monster walking about—a public scarecrow. We must put an end to that scandal—the fellow must be locked up again as soon as possible.

BLIX.

I do not think that Levinski has much joy of his liberty—he is said to be broken, soul and body. His fellow partisans will have nothing to do with him—they suspect that he bought his pardon with treachery. For my part, I do not believe it.

PRETORIUS.

The proceedings of the court martial were secret, of course, but I know this much—that Levinski did not proffer himself as state's evidence. If he had deserted his ac-

complices, his liberation would be explicable. But as things are, I cannot see anything in Frank's actions except a deplorable proof of weakening mental powers.

BLIX.

Come now, that is saying a little too much—we can strip him of a good many things, but in the name of truth we shall have to leave him his mental powers.

ULVELING.

That is right—continue your eulogy! You always have been his sworn adherent, and, in your innermost heart, you still are.

BLIX.

I have attacked him pretty violently in my paper.

ULVELING.

By no means violently enough. An undercurrent of sympathy, a regret for his fall are noticeable in your articles—do not try to deny it.

BLIX.

Well, I am that way—it cannot be helped—I am inclined to be more or less swayed by the impulse of the moment.

ULVELING.

As far as I am concerned, you may be swayed by your impulses as much as you like, if you will just be careful

enough to see that your impulses are always on the right side.

BLIX.

Your Excellency will have no cause for dissatisfaction. I am sure you will be pleased with my article on the change of ministry. I should like to be allowed to read it to you —I have proof-sheets of it in my pocket. . . .

ULVELING.

I do not anticipate anything much. But let me hear what you have patched together.

BLIX (*reads*).

"Robert Frank has fallen and will never rise again. The future contains no other hope for him, who only recently belonged to the mighty ones of the earth, than that his guilty past may sink into merciful oblivion."

ULVELING.

That is not bad. But it seems to me that your voice faltered—is it by chance from sympathy?

BLIX.

Oh, no, it is only that the sentence has such a euphonious cadence. When I write anything really beautiful, I am always affected by it—purely artistic emotion.

ULVELING.

Indeed! Well, go on with the text. . . .

BLIX (*reads*).

"When it became clear that his ill-judged policy was bringing the country and society to the edge of the chasm, the nation turned from him and cried out for a new chief whose leadership would insure safety. And just as the need was greatest, the chieftain appeared; he revealed himself in the venerable form of Jakob Ulveling."

ULVELING.

No, by Jove! You are not going to be allowed to call me "venerable"! . . . People that do not know me will think that I am a tottering octogenarian.

BLIX.

All right, I shall find a more suitable adjective. . . . (*He reads.*) "Unlike Robert Frank, who suffered no independent spirit beside him, Mr. Ulveling has surrounded himself with co-operators who are without exception eminent men."

ULVELING.

Well, I cannot say that I would call them eminent. But never mind. . . . Just read on. . . .

BLIX (*reads*).

"There may be some who wonder why a place has not been made in the governmental constellation for the new star which has so suddenly come to light in our political

arch of heaven. It will be understood that we refer to the young representative whom Parliament called its Benjamin, but who has now proven himself to be a David, the slayer of our Goliath."

ULVELING.

Well, I must say! Is that the way you support me! By making objections to the composition of the government!

BLIX.

I am not the one that is making this objection. I state it here only in order to confute it below. The criticism must be disarmed in advance.

ULVELING.

There will not be any criticism on account of that sapling's being kept out.

BLIX.

I am not so sure of that. For he has played a prominent rôle in the whole of this affair. And the very fact that he is so young is an advantage in the eyes of many people.

ULVELING.

But not in mine. I cannot endure young people—they are noisy and forward. It was an impertinence for that greenhorn to interrupt me as if I did not have sense enough myself to know what ought to be said. . . .

"David," you call him—it seems to me I was the one who was David. It was my motion that struck Frank down and not the bark from that ill-mannered pup.

PRETORIUS.

You certainly cannot deny, Mr. Blix, that this young man is an extremely inexperienced politician. He should have been satisfied with his first easily bought success. But in the intoxication of his triumph he wanted to outdo himself, and so he came with this ill-advised bill for an investigation commission against Frank.

BLIX.

A bill which unfortunately was carried unanimously—and you also voted for it, Mr. Pretorius.

PRETORIUS.

When it was once proposed, of course it was necessary to vote for it if one did not wish to bring suspicion on one's self. But it was no less inopportune for that.

BLIX.

It was a two-edged sword. If everything that was ripe under Frank's rule is to be investigated I am afraid that he will not be the one to be compromised the most.

ULVELING.

Perhaps you are anxious for your own skin?

BLIX.

Yes, that, too. But if the worst comes to the worst I can console myself that I shall be in choice society. Don't you agree with me, your Excellency?

ULVELING.

What is it you are taking the liberty of insinuating?

PRETORIUS.

Mr. Blix, I reject with indignation the mere suggestion that people in prominent positions should have been approachable for purposes of corruption.

BLIX.

But, then, why is everybody so afraid that Frank will avenge himself by making exposures? And why are certain people so eager to get hold of his papers? Yes, why is it so absolutely necessary for these papers to be got out of the way?

PRETORIUS.

Because they may possibly show that Frank has at least made attempts at corruption—without success, I do not doubt. But just the fact that prominent men here have been subjected to such insulting attempts—even this fact will be felt as a humiliation to the whole country. Our honorable nation ought to be spared such a shame, and therefore these papers ought to disappear.

ULVELING.

Yes, that is all very well—the papers ought to disappear; but the point is to get hold of them first.

PRETORIUS.

Mr. Winkelmann will doubtless be able to give the necessary information.

ULVELING (*to* WINKELMANN).

Why are you standing over there by the door? Take a chair and sit down by me. (WINKELMANN *pushes a chair hesitatingly toward* ULVELING *and sits down on the edge of it.*)

ULVELING.

I have not had a chance to talk to you properly at all yet. . . . You are a relative of Frank's, I hear.

WINKELMANN.

I am really not related to him, your Excellency. But I was married to his sister who is now dead.

ULVELING.

Indeed, is she dead—that is very sad. . . . So you are Frank's brother-in-law then—and you are probably on good terms with him? You have nothing to complain of with regard to him?

WINKELMANN.

No, I really have not, your Excellency.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

verse. . . . And you have not rebelled at this permanent bad treatment?

WINKELMANN.

I have never liked his calling me Leporello. But I did not want to say anything.

ULVELING.

But now you must tell him that you will not suffer it any longer. For, of course, you understand that he is violating your dignity as a man. Do you not see that?

WINKELMANN.

Yes, I see it now, your Excellency.

ULVELING.

And you must promise me that you will speak up at the first opportunity. Do you hear?

WINKELMANN.

I shall do so if I can, your Excellency.

ULVELING.

You need no longer be afraid of him. You can tell him from me that I am going to give you redress for the injury he has let you suffer. You will get a position that is much better than this wretched secretaryship. A position in keeping with your powers and deserts.

WINKELMANN.

I do not know how to thank your Excellency. . . .

ULVELING.

I demand no thanks. An act of justice is its own reward. . . . But to speak of something else—what papers are these lying here on the writing desk?

WINKELMANN.

They are all sorts of preliminary reports and opinions, your Excellency. Frank gave me instructions to arrange them before they are to be sent back to the departments.

ULVELING.

Then, where are the confidential documents? (WINKELMANN *looks at* ULVELING *questioningly.*)

PRETORIUS.

His Excellency means the collection of pieces of writing that Frank calls by the inelegant appellation "canaille archives." He was in the habit of keeping them in that cupboard.

WINKELMANN.

Yes, they are still there. I have not got so far as to pack them yet.

PRETORIUS (*to* ULVELING).

Well, that makes our work comparatively easy for us, does it not?

ULVELING (*to* WINKELMANN).

Look here— You have no objections to opening the cupboard in my presence, have you?

WINKELMANN.

No, if your Excellency orders me to do so, it is no more than my duty.

ULVELING.

Bravo! You are a man with his heart in the right place. (*He gives his hand to* WINKELMANN.) I respect you, Mr. Leporello—Mr. Winkelmann, I mean to say—excuse my absent-mindedness. . . . Yes, let us begin—the sooner the better. (*All rise and go toward the cupboard, where* WINKELMANN *begins to fumble with the lock.*)

ULVELING.

Doesn't it work? Is there anything the matter with the mechanism?

WINKELMANN.

No, it is only because it is a combination lock, your Excellency. I must put the letters together first. . . .

BLIX.

Old-fashioned arrangement. It is probably an heirloom.

ULVELING.

I would give a good deal to see Frank's face when he discovers that the bird has flown. . . . Ah, there goes the lock! But it is empty.

PRETORIUS.

The middle compartment is empty. But, perhaps, in the drawers . . .

WINKELMANN (*pulls the drawers out*).

I don't understand. . . . Only last night . . .

BLIX.

Not a single scrap of paper there either. . . . He has stolen a march on us. . . . (*Short silence. They all look at each other.*)

ULVELING.

This is the devil and all! (*The door opens and* ROBERT FRANK *comes in. He remains standing a moment, his eyes on those present.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

How do you do, gentlemen? I congratulate you, Ulveling— You have now got your appointment, have you not?

ULVELING.

Yes, I have been appointed. . . . I have been appointed. . . . Yes, I have been . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And so it was your first thought to come up to see me here. This is an attention that I value in the proportion it deserves.

ULVELING.

Yes, I thought I ought to pay a visit to my predecessor . . . as is quite correct and natural . . . in order to present myself as his successor. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I do not know whether I should ask you to sit down. For, in a way, you are the one that is the master here now.

ULVELING.

No, thank you, I think I must go now. . . . I have so many important things to attend to— I am positively loaded with . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I can easily fancy so. But I do not pity you. For, of course, it must be a satisfaction to you that you have now attained the goal of your wishes.

ULVELING.

I have never desired to assume the burden of government.

ROBERT FRANK.

Now don't be a hypocrite, Ulveling.

ULVELING.

I assure you, that I should have been more than glad to have seen some one else undertake this responsible task.

PRETORIUS.

I can testify to that, for I have seen you bowed down with anxiety when you spoke of how much there is to be reconstructed in our sorely tried country. It requires self-denial to take command under such difficult circumstances.

ROBERT FRANK.

Great Heavens, are we augurs going to be just as ceremonious among ourselves as when we are in the presence of the uninitiated? Difficult conditions—that is just the sort of thing politicians support life on.

PRETORIUS.

Support life on!

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, exactly as lawyers do on litigation. If there were no snarls and friction and distress and misery what in the name of Heaven would politicians do? The worse things are, the better they thrive. Of course, they must pretend that they are anxious, for appearance's sake, but they are in reality jubilant over the lucrative adversity.

PRETORIUS.

Fortunately, I have preserved my faith in mankind and I take the liberty of denying that our politicians are the accomplished hypocrites you accuse them of being.

ROBERT FRANK.

Far from it—I by no means rate them so highly. Show me an accomplished hypocrite and I shall take off my hat to this rare bird. For you see it is not given to every man to be able to carry through deliberately the rôle of hypocrite. For that a completeness is necessary and weaklings lack it. They are hypocritical enough, they too, but they will not confess it to themselves. . . . How about you, Pretorius? Do you ever contemplate your own nakedness? I don't believe that you take off your Sunday clothes even in the privacy of your chamber.

PRETORIUS.

I do not intend to answer indiscreet questions. It was not for that purpose I came here.

ROBERT FRANK (*points to the open cupboard*).

No, it is very easy to see why you gentlemen came. With due respect, it was for the purpose of committing a burglary.

PRETORIUS.

Committing a burglary! I must really request you to moderate your language. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And so you persuaded this poor Leporello to be your assistant.

WINKELMANN.

Don't call me Leporello! I can not endure to hear it. You are violating my dignity as a man!

ROBERT FRANK.

Have you lost your senses?

WINKELMANN (*draws back and tries to get behind* ULVELING).

Now I am not afraid of you any longer—not a speck. You can not do me any harm, for his Excellency is protecting me. He has promised me a much better position than the one I had under you. . . .

ULVELING.

Stuff and nonsense! I have not promised you anything.

PRETORIUS.

You must have misunderstood his Excellency.

WINKELMANN (*to* BLIX).

But didn't you tell me . . . ?

BLIX.

Kindly allow me to keep out of this affair.

PRETORIUS (*to* ULVELING).

Ought we not to put an end to this painful scene?

ULVELING.

Yes, let us get away from this cursed place.

ROBERT FRANK.

Wait a moment. It is as well we understand each other without delay. Of course, I know why you wished to sneak away with my private papers . . .

ULVELING.

I intended to confiscate them in the interests of the state. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

It was rather in your own interests, I think. For you know very well that if certain transactions come to light, you will go to pot, my good Ulveling. Both you and several other public men.

ULVELING.

Do you want to bring about a scandal?

ROBERT FRANK.

Not unless I am obliged to do so. I do not enjoy betraying things that have been arranged in private by two men. But our virtuous Parliament will have it thus. It has demanded a glimpse of all my misdeeds—very well, so be it, then we shall see that the exposure is complete, even to the point of nakedness.

PRETORIUS.

But, remember—the scandal will bespatter you, too.

ROBERT FRANK.

Bespatter me—is it not that, perchance, you would prefer above all things?

ULVELING.

It was not I who proposed this cursed investigation commission.

PRETORIUS.

The investigation must be hushed up—considerations of morals and decency make it a duty. We shall always be able to find ways and means to put an end to the activities of the commission.

ROBERT FRANK.

If you gentlemen are willing to beat a retreat, so much the better. Then I will, for the moment, let the papers remain in their safe hiding-place.

ULVELING.

I can rely on everything's being clear sailing now?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, Ulveling, you cannot hope to get rid of me so cheaply. It is not enough for me that you forbear to discommode me—I intend to have both you and the

others under my thumb. You will not be permitted to gambol as you will, for I do not choose for you to commit too many blunders which I shall have to repair later when I assume the reins of government again. Remember, I have a hold over you—Banquo's ghost may appear at any moment. So I hope you will behave yourself, for your own sakes. . . . Well, that is all I wish to impress upon you. And now I shall not detain you any longer—good-by, gentlemen. (ULVELING *turns to go, also* PRETORIUS *and* BLIX.)

WINKELMANN (*follows at* ULVELING'S *heels*).

One word, your Excellency, only a word. . . .

ULVELING.

Go to Jericho! (WINKELMANN *recoils and remains standing motionless.* ULVELING, PRETORIUS, *and* BLIX *go out.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, Leporello—are you turned to a pillar of salt?

WINKELMANN.

Be merciful! Forgive me! I did not know what I was doing.

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, you knew it well enough. But don't let us take things tragically, Leporello.

WINKELMANN.

No, you do not mind all this, do you? And you will not cast me from you, either? You will not take from me the little pension you promised me?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, why should I? You have not shown yourself in any other light to-day than the one in which I have always seen you.

WINKELMANN.

Thanks, a thousand thanks! You lift a stone from my heart. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Now we have had enough of this. But tell me what is the meaning of this—that there was not a servant to be seen in the entire house on my return.

WINKELMANN.

The servants thought you were not coming back before late to-night. And so they all wanted to go out in town to look for new places. I have not been able to do anything with them since they were dismissed.

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, it is quite natural that they think of themselves.

WINKELMANN.

The only one that has stayed at home is the porter and he has taken to drink, so God knows whom he may not let

in. Ugh, it is so unpleasant in this desolate house. . . . And the worst of all is that the cook has gone out, too. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

And you are probably hungry, Leporello. Mental emotion sharpens the appetite.

WINKELMANN.

Yes, it certainly does. . . . If you will allow me, I will make a flying trip to the pantry—I want to do so before it gets dark. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, go on, Leporello. (WINKELMANN *goes.* ROBERT FRANK *sits down at the desk and busies himself with the documents. There is a knock on the door.*) Come in.

JULIA CAMERON (*comes in*).

Mr. Winkelmann said that he thought you would receive me. . . .

ROBERT FRANK (*goes to meet her*).

Is it you? Is it really you? So I was to have one more happy hour after all. . . . (*He leads her to a sofa and takes a seat on a chair near by.*) I had already given up every hope of seeing you again. I have tried time and again to find you in, but always in vain.

JULIA CAMERON.

I have hardly been at home the whole of this time. There has been so much to look after up till now.

ROBERT FRANK.

I know it—you joined the staff of voluntary hospital nurses. And when I found that out I began to have doubts of our ever meeting again.

JULIA CAMERON.

But why?

ROBERT FRANK.

I knew that you would come under the influence of very deep impressions during all this. First in the ambulances and later at the hospital. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

O, it was dreadful! The unhappy creatures! I had never imagined the possibility of such misery! Many times I felt myself growing faint. But the only thing to do was to pull myself together and not think of anything else than that help was needed. And then one can conquer one's weakness.

ROBERT FRANK.

It was not that that made me anxious—I was not afraid you could not hold out. What I feared was that contact

with all that wretchedness would influence your feelings for me. For, of course, I am the one that must bear the responsibility of it.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, yes, but that is another question. I do not think that those two things have anything to do with each other —at least, if they have, it is only externally. For you did not act as you did for the sake of the evil results.

ROBERT FRANK.

Then you do not detest me?

JULIA CAMERON.

I would not have you otherwise than you are for any price.

ROBERT FRANK.

Not even if all of these human lives could have been spared?

JULIA CAMERON.

No, not at that price, either. . . . But you yourself? You speak of the human lives that have been lost—does that weigh on your conscience?

ROBERT FRANK.

Since you ask me—no. The thought of the dead does not affect me.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, how glad I am to hear you say that! I should have been so deeply disappointed if you had begun to regret.

ROBERT FRANK.

I regret only one thing—that I did not go about things more thoroughly. It was not that too many were sacrificed but too few.

JULIA CAMERON.

Could it have been necessary to deal still more harshly with the poor workmen?

ROBERT FRANK.

I am not referring to the workmen—I mastered them. No, it was those higher up that I did not make suffer sufficiently. I thought the strike and the bombs had softened them enough. But they needed still more—I discovered that too late. If I had only arranged things so that a few hundreds of their mighty men had disappeared in the general wash-up. That would have frightened the life out of Parliament and I could have juggled with them as I would. . . . But things turned out differently. I held a wolf by his ears and imagined he was tamed. But before I could think the beast cast himself upon me.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, it is shameful, the way they are attacking you from all quarters. People who were your admirers, who

boasted of being intimate with you. . . . I met Mr. Pretorius down in the vestibule. He bowed to me, but I pretended not to see him. I could have struck him in the face. What a repulsive face he has! I hate him!

ROBERT FRANK.

No, let us not find fault with Pretorius and the others. I have myself to thank for their having rebelled against me. I miscalculated in regard to one important factor, and the defection of my adherents is no more than the wages I deserve.

JULIA CAMERON.

You are unjust to yourself. Miscalculated, you say—but you must not forget that you had already triumphed, that you stood there the conqueror. It was chance, stupid chance that caused things to take a different turn afterward. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I ought not to have arranged matters in such a way that stupid chance should be able to pull down my entire building. . . . But it is useless to brood over a thing that has been neglected. The failure is a fact and I shall have to come to terms with it.

JULIA CAMERON.

And this failure, as you call it—do you feel it very deeply?

ROBERT FRANK.

Of course, I think it is a shame that such a favorable chance was wasted. It is not every day that there comes an opportunity of reconstructing society in the image of reason.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, it is a sin and shame that you did not get to carry out your splendid idea. But it is just so much the worse for this irrational society. You are no less great on account of it. Such external things as success and failure do not change one's inner value. But, of course, I do not need to say that to you. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

No, the unsuccessful man likes to say that to himself. But, of course, he prefers to hear it from others, for that makes the grounds for consolation seem a little more convincing.

JULIA CAMERON.

Now you are ironical. But I am only rejoiced at that, because then I know that you have not allowed yourself to be beaten. That is what I thought, too—a man like you would never give up. . . . It would be too revolting, I think, if your enemies were allowed to say the last word. You must punish them, crush them—first of all that despicable traitor Pretorius. . . . You will go into politics

again, will you not? I am certain you will become mightier than ever. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Everything is possible—even that I should rise to power once more. . . . One's future gives one no concern so long as there is a star to brighten one's path.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, but then I am afraid you must choose another star. For the one you called so has not brought you luck, unfortunately.

ROBERT FRANK.

Who knows but that what now looks like adversity may become good fortune? . . . And besides—does one choose his own star? . . . No, you will always continue to be Stella for me, even though you may refuse to be called so any more.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, I shall be called Stella for now and always. But not because I deserve the name.

ROBERT FRANK.

Then why will you use it? Now, you must answer—you promised me when I saw you last that you would.

JULIA CAMERON.

No, I said that you must guess.

ROBERT FRANK.

And I said that I did not dare. I beg and implore you —do not keep me longer in suspense.

JULIA CAMERON.

Since you beg and implore, of course I shall have to comply. . . . Why I want to use this name? Why, I want to because . . . No, I cannot tell you.

ROBERT FRANK.

Now, you must tell me.

JULIA CAMERON.

I will use it because it is you that gave it to me.

ROBERT FRANK (*rises*).

Stella! . . .

JULIA CAMERON (*rises also*).

Yes, now I have said it. . . . But did you not know? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, Stella! . . . (*He draws her to him and throws his arms about her. They disengage from the embrace. Holding each other's hands, they gaze at each other.*)

JULIA CAMERON (*smiles*).

So I was the first of us two to betray the secret. I would never have believed that any power could have forced me to do so.

ROBERT FRANK.

Oh, Stella, if you knew! . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

What is the matter? Why, you are quite white! And you are trembling. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

It is nothing. A moment's dizziness. It is passing already.

JULIA CAMERON.

Perhaps it is the heat of the room. It is too warm here. I think I will take off my wrap. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

May I assist you? . . . (*He tries to help her take off her coat.*)

JULIA CAMERON (*smiles*).

You are so amusing—the way you do that. You certainly have not had much practice in dancing attendance on a woman. But a man like you ought not to be so, either. That is exactly the way I would have you—so beautifully awkward. . . . Thanks, I will take off my hat myself—that is too sacred a thing for you to be allowed to touch. My aunt says that for women the hat is of much more importance than the head. (*They sit down on the sofa; he puts his arm around her.*)

JULIA CAMERON.

How inconceivable that we should sit here so near each other and you should call me Stella and I have the courage to call you Robert! I have called you that for a long time to myself—you should only know how often, I have whispered your Christian name. But now I can say it aloud to you. I am the only one who is allowed to. No one else but me?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, no one but you.

JULIA CAMERON.

But before you knew me? . . . There have been others before me. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

You are my first and only love.

JULIA CAMERON.

But is it not always so with every love—that one imagines each one is the first?

ROBERT FRANK.

I have had no such experiences. Of course, I have had infatuations, but I have never loved before now. I loved you from the first moment you appeared.

JULIA CAMERON.

It was the same with me. And do you know what charmed me instantly? It was the indescribable way in

which you smile. Do you remember, Robert, when my aunt betrayed to you that your smile had made an impression on me? I was so ashamed I wanted to sink into the earth, for I had such deadly respect for you. . . . Did you not notice how confused I was?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, I was so overwhelmed myself at this first meeting that I had all I could do to preserve my own equilibrium.

JULIA CAMERON.

And fancy, I thought you stood there as unmoved as a bronze statue. And I—I felt like a little trembling bird. And as you talked to me, it was as though I fell deeper and deeper into your net. Did you not notice that, either?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, I assure you I did not suspect that what I said had such a powerful effect on you.

JULIA CAMERON.

It was not only what you said but that it was you who said it. I had never experienced anything like it. But then, when you went away and I was left alone, I resolved that I would free myself from this enchantment.

ROBERT FRANK.

That was the reason, then, that such a long time passed before you allowed me to see you. And when we did meet the next time, you had armed yourself against me.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, I disagreed with you at first. I thought I ought to defend my poor little creed. But deep down in me I was only longing to be vanquished again. . . . Oh, Robert, Robert, this blessed self-abandonment! . . . (*She throws herself in his arms. Short silence.*)

ROBERT FRANK.

Look at me, Stella!

JULIA CAMERON.

What is it, Robert? You have suddenly become so serious. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

There is something I want to ask you, and which you must answer quite sincerely. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Only ask, Robert!

ROBERT FRANK.

Tell me one thing—during the time when you were avoiding me, was there not another man? One who was on the point of capturing your fancy—so much so that he almost took you from me?

JULIA CAMERON.

No; how can you think such a thing?

ROBERT FRANK.

It was you yourself who awakened the suspicion in my mind. You referred to a certain person with noticeable warmth. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Now I understand whom you mean. Yes, I could not help teasing you a little about Mr. Levinski. I thought that I could see you were jealous, and so I wanted to make a test in order to be sure. I wanted to know whether you cared for me or not. And my heart throbbed and danced with joy when I succeeded in leading you where I would. . . . Oh, you were so easy to deceive! A great man like you! And it suited you so charmingly. I could have embraced you on the spot.

ROBERT FRANK.

Why shouldn't I have allowed myself to be deceived? Levinski is by no means an ordinary man. In addition, he is young and good-looking—I am neither. And you know that, as a rule, women are not unsusceptible to those advantages.

JULIA CAMERON.

Will you stop saying such nonsensical things to me? If you do not, I shall pull your hair. For you are mine now, and I may do with you as I will. You will not deny that, will you?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, you may do with me as you will, Stella. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

You say that so absent-mindedly. Are you still thinking of my little coquetry? It was very innocent, was it not?

ROBERT FRANK.

Of course, it was. . . . No, the mistake was mine—that I continued to doubt. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

But how *could* you still doubt after what happened afterward? For I showed you so plainly how my heart was going out to meet yours.

ROBERT FRANK.

Nevertheless, it left a sting. I did not feel perfectly sure of you. And, led by that uncertainty, I let myself be tempted to do a thing which ought to have been left undone. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

In what way, Robert?

ROBERT FRANK.

Do you remember saying, Stella, that Levinski ought to become a martyr, for that then the heroic in him would come to the surface . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, and I really *meant* it, too. He would have shown off splendidly as a martyr. However, he did not become one.

ROBERT FRANK.

No, he did not, because I prevented him. I did not want the memory of him to haunt your imagination.

JULIA CAMERON.

It would never have done that. In reality, I regard him with such indifference.

ROBERT FRANK.

Then what I did was unnecessary besides, for I was thinking of *you* when I pardoned Levinski.

JULIA CAMERON.

You were thinking of me? You did it for my sake! (*She throws her arms about his neck.*) Oh, Robert, I am so happy, so happy! . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Are you happy to hear that I have been guilty of arbitrariness?

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, why not?—when you did so from love. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

It is exactly that that is wrong. I ought not to have mixed love and politics.

JULIA CAMERON.

You mean that it was unwise to pardon him because it injured you politically?

ROBERT FRANK.

No, that is not the trouble. It made no difference as far as that was concerned.

JULIA CAMERON.

Well, then, I do not think it is a thing to take to heart —when it had no consequences at all.

ROBERT FRANK.

It is not only the consequences that count but also the act itself. . . . Everything else I have taken upon myself does not worry me, for in those things I acted with no other motive than the cause itself. But this with Levinski had nothing to do with the cause, and therefore it was an evil thing.

JULIA CAMERON.

But, Robert, you cannot call your action evil. If you had *sacrificed* a human creature for purely personal motives, of course, *that* would have been dreadful. But in

this case it is just the opposite—a human life was saved. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

That is no alleviating circumstance. One *ought* not to help save a creature whom the logic of things has doomed to destruction.

JULIA CAMERON.

Is it so wrong, then, to violate the logic of things?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, it is just about as wrong as to make bad poetry. For in both cases one sins against rhyme and rhythm.

JULIA CAMERON.

You say that jokingly, but I have a feeling that you are taking it rather seriously.

ROBERT FRANK.

And it *is* a pretty serious thing to disregard consequence and proportion and unity. . . . The law of harmony is really the only one that should never be offended. . . .

JULIA CAMERON.

I am beginning to be so anxious, Robert. I would not for anything in the world have caused you to do a thing you need to regret.

ROBERT FRANK.

Dismiss your anxiety, Stella! It is stupid of me to trouble you with these useless scruples. But it is doubtless the fault of the darkness. When evening draws on, one feels melancholy beginning to creep in. . . . (*He rises.*) What do you say, Stella—shall I not turn on the lights?

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, no, don't—it is not quite dark yet. And it is so delicious to be together in the twilight. It makes things more intimate, I think—it is as if you were still nearer to me. . . . But why do you go from me, Robert?

ROBERT FRANK (*stands still by the desk and gazes at her*).

Do you know, Stella, when I look at you thus from a distance—as you sit there in the twilight you seem more like yourself? Your features, your silhouette are blurred, but you yourself appear more distinct to me.

JULIA CAMERON.

Am I not always like myself, then?

ROBERT FRANK.

No one is always like himself. One's true picture is only seen in glimpses.

JULIA CAMERON.

One's true picture? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I mean the truth that reality hides from us. It is only at odd moments that we comprehend a creature's true meaning. And then instantly reality comes with its unessentials and veils the impression. . . . Have you never experienced that?

JULIA CAMERON.

I have never experienced but one thing with you, and that is that the more I have seen of you in reality the more I have loved you.

ROBERT FRANK.

You must not think that I love you less, Stella, because I want to see you again as I saw you the first time our eyes met. You do not know, you cannot know, what it is that leads me to conjure forth the sight once more.

JULIA CAMERON.

You said that you felt it as a recognition—from another existence. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, but it was not that alone.

JULIA CAMERON.

What else was it? Can you not tell me, Robert?

ROBERT FRANK.

It is difficult to explain. . . . When I looked at you, Stella, and you looked at me—how can I describe what thrilled me at that moment? It was like a flash of lightning at night, a sudden revelation of a mysterious coherence, that included us both. I had a vision of something great and obscure that you were bringing me—it seemed like a premonition and like a memory as well. For the unspeakable that was to be had *already* been consummated—I caught a glimpse of it in that eternity that has neither past nor future. . . . (*He stops and gazes at her again.*) Stella—now it is as though your picture were rising before me as at that time. Your face is so wonderfully pale, your eyes so supernaturally dark. . . .

JULIA CAMERON (*rises and goes toward him*).

No, Robert, there is nothing supernatural about me, and I do not wish to be loved as a shadow-picture only. Must I be jealous of my own phantom? Can you not care for me such as I am? Does my unbounded love mean nothing to you? My love for you, Robert, as *you* are in flesh and blood and not as a picture that must be conjured forth . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

You misapprehend me, Stella—it is certainly not only as a picture that I love you. . . . Do you not know that I have longed for your bodily apparition hundreds of times,

that I have grown faint at the thought of daring to hold you in my arms, to embrace you, to press you to me? . . . (*He draws her passionately to him.*)

JULIA CAMERON (*hides her face on his shoulder*).

Oh, Robert! . . . (*She looks up at him.*) But tell me, shall I be able to be, *really* be, something to you—something more than a fleeting passion? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

If you can! You are all and everything to me; you are my only joy on this God-forsaken earth.

JULIA CAMERON.

Is that true, Robert? . . . Can you believe it?—I could almost bless Fate for the adversity it has brought you. I know that it is wrong of me, but it is so tempting to imagine that I may perhaps be able to help you. Yes, I only mean, help you drive away dark thoughts.

ROBERT FRANK.

You have already driven them away, Stella—by your words, your glance, your blessed presence. Your love is like the music of a harp—it makes the evil spirits flee.

JULIA CAMERON.

Oh, that you may always feel thus, Robert! I do not know anything I would not do to prevent past memories from weighing on your mind.

ROBERT FRANK.

Memories—no, they have already floated away in a mist. . . . The failure and the tribulations, the struggles, the tumult, and the blood that flowed—all loom up far, far away in a golden gleam.

JULIA CAMERON.

In a golden gleam? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, now it all appears to me as if it were a time of secret promises and unconscious preparation for a feast—for was it *not* the path and the entrance to my new-found *Paradise?* What else can the past mean to me now? . . . *You* and I *here* in the twilight and in the silence about us *is* it *not* as if the whole world were obliterated, as if we were wandering in a dreamland with deep woods about us *no one* but us two, us two alone? . . .

JULIA CAMERON (*presses close to him*).

We two alone! . . . Robert, this happiness—how tremulous, how wonderful! . . .

(*Their lips meet in a long kiss. Some one is heard outside fumbling with the door. They draw away from each other.* LEVINSKI *comes in; he is wasted and hollow-eyed. Short pause.*)

LEVINSKI.

I come unannounced. But I attach little importance to formalities.

ROBERT FRANK.

So it seems. . . . May I ask what you wish of me?

LEVINSKI.

I have come to demand an explanation from you.

ROBERT FRANK.

Indeed. But it is rather inconvenient just now. As you see, I have a visitor.

LEVINSKI.

I am willing for Miss Cameron to hear what I have to say to you. And I shall express myself to the point. But I must talk with you *now*. I cannot postpone it.

ROBERT FRANK.

Well, if you absolutely will . . .

LEVINSKI.

One question, to begin with. You have "pardoned" me, as people call it. But I do not thank you for it. For do you not think yourself that I had earned a *right* to share the fate of my comrades?

ROBERT FRANK.

Yes, you undeniably had.

LEVINSKI.

You acknowledge it, then. But, nevertheless, you cheated me of this right. It was given to the others to suf-

fer for their cause—I alone was excluded from the glory of martyrdom. I had no suspicion of it as long as I was in prison. Not till after I was liberated did I learn the overwhelming truth. They asked me what it meant, and I could not reply. From that moment I was branded as a traitor. Everywhere I went I saw backs turned upon me, shrugs of contempt, eyes full of hate. I, whom the laborers had once hailed as a Messiah, have now become a Judas, who sinks under their curses. This is *your* work, Robert Frank. But now you shall answer for it.

JULIA CAMERON.

Mr. Levinski, what you say pains me very much—for I am afraid that it is I who am the cause of the whole thing.

LEVINSKI.

You, Miss Cameron? How could *you* have any share in this? . . . It cannot be that you interceded for me and that *that* determined the issue. If so, then you have acted toward me worse than my bitterest enemy.

JULIA CAMERON.

No, it was not as you think—it happened in quite another way. . . . No, it is impossible for me to explain it. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Miss Cameron did not even know that I intended to pardon you. No one but myself is responsible for it.

LEVINSKI.

But the *reason* for your doing it—I will know the reason. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I cannot inform you in regard to that.

LEVINSKI.

You have ruined my life, but you will not tell me why. It seems to me that I have a right to demand so much. But I dare say your motive was of such a nature that even a man of your calibre would not care to confess it.

ROBERT FRANK.

You may think as you please about that.

LEVINSKI.

I think no longer, for now I have certainty. I have discovered your object.

ROBERT FRANK.

I have great doubts of that.

LEVINSKI.

Shall I tell you what was behind it all? You wanted to strike a blow at the entire labor movement through me, who was its leader. My ignominy was to recoil upon the cause itself. And the laborers were to be filled with disgust and distrust. And thus would their revolutionary

will and powers be killed for a long time to come. . . . What you had in mind was neither more nor less than a poisoning of souls.

ROBERT FRANK.

The motive you attribute to me sounds rather plausible. But, nevertheless, you are on the wrong track.

LEVINSKI.

Why should you scruple to poison souls, you, who did not shrink from all that other massacre. Perhaps you will be kind enough to tell me whether there exists a crime too great for you to consider it permissible?

ROBERT FRANK.

My good Mr. Levinski, this question is not so easy to answer. Whether a great crime be permissible or not depends on the motives and the man himself—whether he is equal to his crime, whether or not he has the proper dimensions.

LEVINSKI.

And, of course, *you* have the proper dimensions and that is why you trample all human considerations under foot. What are human beings to *you*? Not fellow creatures but only material to be used in the execution of your plans. It is clear that you have wished to float over society as a sort of Providence, to play the rôle of earthly Lord God. But has it never occurred to you in your

blind arrogance that one day another man might appear, one who had both the desire and the dimensions to act Providence and Lord God toward you yourself? . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

Let us have no digressions but keep to the point. It is probably for the sake of your own affairs, not mine, that you have come here. You have been so unfortunate as to be placed in a false light and you now want to put an end to this situation. This, I presume, is the meaning of your visit.

LEVINSKI.

Yes, I will have an end to it, for *this* existence is unbearable. I would have come to you before now but I have been dangerously ill. And more than once did I call upon death as my saviour, and when it would not come to me I thought of suicide. But I saw that it was necessary for me to live on in order to re-establish my honor. And you, Robert Frank, you who brought about my downfall, shall be the one to help lift me up again.

JULIA CAMERON.

Yes, can you not do that, Robert? You must really repair this injury. I implore you to do so. . . .

ROBERT FRANK.

I have no objections to sending out a printed declaration if that will satisfy you.

LEVINSKI.

And what would this declaration say?

ROBERT FRANK.

That you have neither said nor done anything in order to obtain pardon—that in so far you are without blame.

LEVINSKI.

That will only be looked upon as another good turn you do me as reward for the betrayal. People will continue to ask, why, then, was I liberated?—unless you will give a frank confession of the real reason. But I see you do not wish to come with the real reason.

ROBERT FRANK.

No, that I shall keep to myself. The public has nothing to do with it.

LEVINSKI.

Is this your last word?

ROBERT FRANK.

My last word on *this* subject.

LEVINSKI.

Good! Then you will have to help me in another way.

ROBERT FRANK.

I do not see exactly how that can be done.